

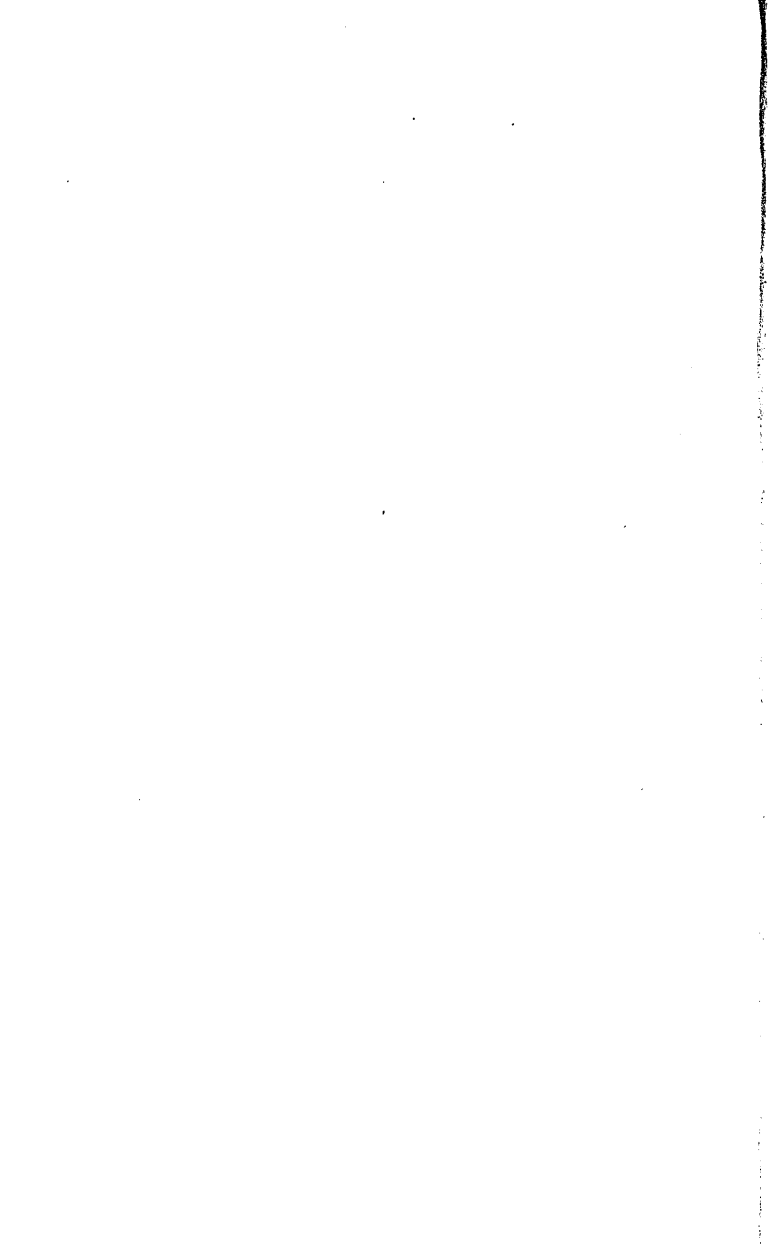
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From the Estate of
Mrs. Bernard I. Bell

Bernard Juddings Beer
His Book

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THE PRIESTLY WAY

The Priestly Way

A SPIRITUAL RETREAT FOR PRIESTS

By

BERNARD IDDINGS BELL

Holy Cross Press, West Park, N. Y.

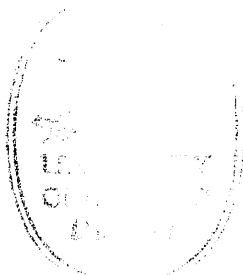
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To the Memory of
JAMES OTIS SARGENT HUNTINGTON
Founder of the Order of the Holy Cross

INTRODUCTION

CANON BELL himself needs no introduction. I shall only thank him for allowing the Holy Cross Press to publish his latest book; and assure its readers that they will find here the same solid thought and trenchant phraseology that characterizes all his other work.

With regard to the purpose and subject-matter of the volume, however, much may be said. Delivered, originally, to groups of priests in retreat at Holy Cross during the autumns of 1936 and 1937, it has already proved its practicality and fruitfulness; and will be useful both to those who listened to it then and to others who did not have the opportunity.

The retreat-movement is gaining with extraordinary rapidity both in England and America. More and more priests and Seminarists are realizing what a gain it is to go into some quiet place and be alone with God. But they feel the need of direction.

If it is practicable to unite with a group of others under the guidance of an experienced retreat-conductor, well and good. But it is not possible to do this in every case. And there are almost no books, written by Anglicans, with the express purpose of furnishing

material for the thought and prayer of retreatants. Indeed, to the best of my knowledge, this is the first to be published in America.

It may not be amiss to offer the following suggestions to one who purposes making an individual retreat:

1. Set aside for retreat at least two full days; three is better. Plan to begin with an earnest self-dedication to God sometime during the evening before the first day and to close with your Mass (or Communion) of Thanksgiving on the morning after the last day.

2. If it is possible, go away from home. To do so will not only help to prevent interruptions but will give you a fresh setting (one not saturated with distracting or deadening associations).

Here at Holy Cross we have a steady succession of retreatants, both priests and laymen, who come individually or in groups. We would gladly welcome more; and I am sure that this is true of the monasteries belonging to all the Religious Orders.

Perhaps, if you are too far removed from a monastery or other retreat-house, some brother-priest would welcome you and make generous provision that you shall be undisturbed.

All other things being equal, it is an advantage to be in the country, or at all events, in as quiet a place as possible.

3. The prime mover and the real guide and instructor in any retreat (whether or not there be a hu-

man "conductor") is God. It is His part to speak to your heart, to show you fresh visions of His love and beauty and tenderness, and to reveal His purpose for you more clearly than ever before.

4. Your part is to listen; and to do this you must keep silence. "Be still and know that I am God." Observe the stillness in the following ways:

(a) By absolute silence of the tongue, except for praising God and except for spiritual conference with the retreat-conductor if there be one; in any case, it is well to make your confession—and to make it early in the retreat so that you can go on to more positive considerations.

(b) By refraining as far as may be possible from the work of your ordinary life. Certainly you should abstain from the preparation of sermons, etc.; and the ideal thing is to write not a single letter. These days are to be walled apart. They are a tryst between your soul and God. Others will derive great advantage from them, but they will do so either through your prayers or as the indirect result of what you yourself will undoubtedly gain if you make the retreat well.

(c) By rest and relaxation; for a retreat should not be a time of strain. Get plenty of sleep, sufficient exercise—a brisk walk each day, perhaps, to avoid sluggishness—enough food. There are occasions in our lives when we should practice special austerities. But a retreat is not such an occasion.

If one feels that he is in danger of getting over-tense

or keyed-up, it is well to spend a certain amount of time each day in quiet but entertaining secular reading.

5. Have a carefully planned, written schedule which will cover the entire day and include times for offering or assisting at Mass, Offices, meditations, intercessions, spiritual reading, light reading, meals, sleep, exercise, etc. Though I say that this time-table should cover the entire day, I do not mean that it should prelude several short spaces which you can use as the Spirit moves you to pray, smoke, or watch the grass grow. Having made your schedule, let it be a point of honour with yourself and God to keep it.

6. Pray, as you never prayed before.

And now, to return to this book; it is not intended as a substitute for your private meditation and prayer.

What it is intended for is to give you fresh thoughts about God and about your priestly vocation—thoughts which will take seed in your heart as you read it recollectedly (one portion at a time, two or three times each day, during the retreat) and which will bear fruit in your prayer and in your life.

A retreat is a great adventure. You will be helped in making one profitably by this book. May our dear Lord bless you in the use of it.

ALAN WHITTEMORE, O.H.C.

Holy Cross

Epiphany, 1938

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THE PRIESTLY WAY

CALLING

"**H**E CALLED unto Him the Twelve and began to send them out."¹ "Among whom are ye also, the called of Jesus Christ."² So the Scriptures. And at my ordination the Bishop asked me, "Do you think in your heart that you are truly called, according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ?" And I replied: "I think it."

The life of a priest is a difficult one in which not to come on spiritual disaster, difficult even when one has been truly called. It is recorded that St. John Vianney, all his early years, longed for the priesthood, and persevered against tremendous difficulties to attain it. If ever a priest was truly called, it was he. Yet, in his later days, he said that if he had known what in the priesthood is demanded and required of a man, he would never have dared to face ordination. All of us come to feel much the same, so great is the work to be done, so responsible is each one of us for his every word and act, so little one seems to accomplish.

Yet there are some men who thrust themselves on priesthood, who enter the sacred ministry as though

¹St. Mark 6:7.

²Romans 1:6.

it were only a profession. They take it up with thought of gain or ease or comfort it may bring, or with imaginative prevision of priesthood as an avenue for self-expression in leadership; or (if they be less selfish) with thought that they of themselves can greatly help other people, manipulate or persuade them into goodness, or the like. One may be, must be, sorry for such priests. After a few years they are sure to come on disillusionment; to learn that, if the ministry is a profession, it is without doubt a most unsatisfactory one. They discover that it does not give to them, and never will give, what they once thought it would. When that time of awakening comes, these men whose ministry has been only a profession divide into two classes. Some seek at all cost still to gratify ambition, hold applause, bank monetary gain, even though any truly honest sense of goodness must be banished. They sell their souls and destroy integrity. Pity them. Pray for them. For the most part they know only too well what they have done; and, dodge the realization as they will, they are aware that God knows what they have done. But all who have been ordained without having first been called are not that unfortunate. When the disillusionment comes, this second sort, being more honourable, face their ministry for the first time; and then for the first time God calls them; and they cease merely to be parsons and begin their lives as priests. How many such there are, who were converted and called long after ordination—men like St. Thomas à Becket. He

should be invoked on behalf of all worldly and ambitious ministers of God. He was such a one, for many years; and then at last God called him to service and to death and to sainthood.

Happy are they whom God called in the first place. Happy is that priest who in the days of his early manhood felt dissatisfaction with what the world has to offer, and knew that it is not worth man's pursuing; who looked on the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them from youth's high mountain, and longed for better things than these; who had hunger for God; who had desire for heroic search, search that would cost much, yes, even all his possessions and all his being; who wished to sell what he had and therewith buy the pearl of God's love, that pearl which one can not treasure for one's self but must freely share with all who see that it is precious. To such a one, the priesthood is no profession, not something to be sought, but a life and work to which God summons. Thank God for the calling!

As a priest I am called to four things: to a privilege, to an obedience, to an authority, and to a labour. These are all summed up, in epitome, in that first calling, recorded in St. Mark's Gospel. "He called unto Him the Twelve . . . and began to send them forth . . . and He gave them authority over unclean spirits; and they cast out many devils . . . and healed."

(1) *He called me unto Him.* That is the *privilege*. Of course, God calls all Christians unto Him; but

to the priest is granted an especial nearness, necessary to enable him for a life of especial difficulty, for the task of presenting the Lord to a world that is disastrously submerged in itself. Thank God for that especial closeness: for quiet contemplation of Him, and for the right to take His Sacredness into my hands, to lift up the Most Holy at the Altar. A priest could get nowhere in his labours were it not for that nearness. I can be as close to Him as were the Twelve. I can be as close to Him as were Peter, James, and John on the Mount, that time when He was transfigured and they beheld the Glory. I can be as close to Him as was Mary Magdalene, when He spoke to her on Easter and she sank at His feet with the cry of greeting. I can be as close to Him as was Paul when, in the dust of the Damascus road, the Apostle heard the Voice which told him of the hard and lonely road that lay before him. I can be as close to Him as was the Mother who loved Him. "Father, I will that they also be with Me where I am."³ "I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them even as Thou hast loved me."⁴

But though He is always with the priest, the priest, alas, is not always with, but wanders far afield. The world and its cares, the pressures of a secularistic society, the sweet enticements of friends and loved

³St. John 17:24.

⁴St. John 17:23.

ones—all these reach out and lure him from his Lord. Once one heard Him, heard so vividly that nothing else mattered. Then other voices came in between. But He keeps on calling. "Apart from Me," so He says, "you can do nothing."⁵ "Behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the world."⁶

So be it. I am called to His *comradeship*. That comes first in priesthood—before obedience, before authority, before labour. The priest may say, can say, must say, with David, those words of the Psalm which Peter quoted in the first Christian sermon: "I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for He is on my right hand, that I should not be moved. Therefore did my heart rejoice and my tongue was glad. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; Thou shalt make me full of joy with Thy countenance." Peter knew what that meant: and men, looking on Peter, had knowledge that he knew it. No wonder that, when Peter had finished speaking, "the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls."⁷

(2) *He called me that I might prepare His way.*

He called me that He might send me to men and women, that He may follow on where I precede Him. That is my obedience. "He sent them . . . into every city and place whither He Himself would come."⁸

⁵St. John 15:5.

⁶St. Matthew 28:20.

⁷Acts 2:25, 26, 28, 41.

⁸St. Luke 10:1.

He is the Light of the World. The priest is sent to bear witness of that Light, that all men through us may believe.⁹ I am sent that He may come.

A priest is not sent merely to build up the parish, or to make wheels go round, or to go about his duty calls, or to run organizations, or to erect buildings, or to promote civic enterprises, or to raise money: for none of these is he sent, except when they may enable him to bear witness of that Light which lighteneth the world. I am sent to proclaim the Good-news: that in God is such compassion that He is willing to suffer and die for men and women; that He so loves the world that, having died for it, and being risen from the dead, He pours out forever the water of life that the thirsty may drink thereof and never thirst again; that He is true Bread from Heaven for the hungry souls of earth; that He calls the heavy-laden to Him and gives them rest. To tell the world that Gospel of redemption and release, and to provide in the Holy Sacraments, for them who obey Him, sustenance of His divine compassion: it is for this that He sends me forth.

At first, perhaps, most priests understand. Then, other duties seem to summon. Families make demands. Parishes ask for care, not in God's way, but in the devious ways that half-converted people crave; they begin to neglect, yes, almost to forget, the heathen round about, those outside the congregation, outside

⁹St. John 1:7-8.

the Church, outside the touch of religion, for whom Christ died and lives as truly as for respectable communicants. It seems more and more to be demanded that priests shall do a thousand various things. There is little time left for prayer, study, teaching, evangelizing. There is little time left in which to seek and win the lost. They are told to go on, hired servants of those already found. Everything but what He sent them to do, they must do. They come at last to feel that they are helpless, caught in a machine that has entrapped them. They begin to tell themselves comforting lies. The real reason that they tend tables and flatter irreligious parishioners and stop their ears to the call of the God who sent them to bring Him to the world is that they are cowards. They are afraid, afraid that if they do not give their time to a petty round of pseudo-ministerial performances, they will become unpopular, fail to get their salaries, lose their jobs.

Hear the Lord God, speaking to the shepherds: "Should not the shepherds *feed the sheep*? Ye eat the fat; ye clothe you with the wool. . . . The diseased have ye not strengthened; neither have ye healed that which was sick; neither have ye bound up that which was broken; neither have ye brought that which was driven away. . . . As I live, saith the Lord God, because . . . the shepherds did not search out My flock, . . . therefore am I against these shepherds; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more."¹⁰ So

¹⁰Ezekiel 34:1-10.

must it be with me if I do not put Him first, if I do not bring Him to the flock, the whole flock, most of which wanders over hill and valley. But meanwhile, lest in the end that be my condemnation, He *calls again* to me, His priest: "Behold I send you forth into every city and place whither I Myself will come. Take nothing for the journey. Care not for bread, nor for wallet, nor for money in the purse. You have your commission. Go; that I may follow where you tread."

(3) *I am called to cast out demons.* "Take *authority*," He said, "to drive out devils, not opposing evil with evil, but overcoming evil with good." "Watch you; quit you like men; be strong."¹¹ "He gave them power and authority over all devils."¹²

It is not common in these days to speak much of devils, nor to lay the sins and madness of mankind to demoniacal possession. It does not matter what one calls the thing, provided he understands it. What our fathers called possession by evil spirits, we may call the disintegration of personality, or a defective orientation, or any thing we choose; but let us recognize that what goes by the new, high-sounding scientific name, is the same old evil that Jesus contended against, destructive alike of individual happiness and of social safety. It is sin, this ancient enemy renamed, sin in the plain sense of the Greek word for sin. It is "shooting to one side of the mark." First century Jews laid this

¹¹I Corinthians 16:13.

¹²St. Luke 9:1.

wrong shooting to a control by demons; we may lay it to what we will. The point is that we are to overcome the horrid thing.

I am given authority so to do. "Whosoever sins ye do remit, they are remitted unto them."¹³ The Son of Man has power to forgive sin, to overcome sin, too. That is His first work. "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." And as the Father has sent the Son to cast out demons, to reintegrate personalities, to reorientate lives now organized toward confused or insufficient objectives, to draw again into focus diffused and blurred mentalities, to make God central and self subordinate, to unify those torn and divided by Legion, pulled this way and that toward despair, surrender, suicide: as the Father has sent the Son to do all this, even so the Son has sent His priests in His Name to do it. "He gave them authority over unclean spirits,"¹⁴ "and they went out and preached that men should repent, and they cast out many devils."¹⁵

This casting out is done chiefly in the confessional, to which therefore the priest must be faithful, as to a primary obligation. He must publicly advertise his regular sittings in the same and then sit there, ready, even if no one should come. It is recorded of an English vicar that in his times of waiting, week by week,

¹³St. John 20:23.

¹⁴St. Mark 6:7.

¹⁵St. Mark 6:13.

he sat patiently in the confessional until he had read through nearly the whole of St. Thomas' *Summa contra Gentiles*, before the first penitent came; but also we read that before that vicar died, thirty years later, his parish and his community were transformed, and chiefly by that once neglected Sacrament of Penance. Since for this contending with demons he has direct command from the Lord, a priest cannot decently, even if he would, put his confessional in a hole in the corner of the parish life and work. He cannot, it is happily true, compel any to come; but he must be regularly where they can come, come knowing that a priest will be there, come easily, come quietly, come anonymously, come without advertising themselves even to the priest's family. A pastor must advise them of it, putting Penance before them not as a duty to which men are driven, but as the response of God to dire necessity within themselves. And the priest must labour kindly but with firmness over every penitent that does come. The hardest work a priest can do, the most exhausting, is his work "within the box." He must do more, however, than sit there and judge. "Lord, why could we not cast the demon out?" "This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting."¹⁶

(4) *And lastly, I am called and sent to heal diseases.*

I am to assuage not merely physical illness, though

¹⁶St. Matthew 17:21.

it is certainly a priestly duty to bring, by Holy Unction and prayer, the healing power that Jesus possesses over diseased bodies, to bear upon those physically suffering and disabled. I am not to visit the sick merely in order to pass the time of day, nor to cheer them up. (What a horrid nuisance is the bringer of a spurious brightness to one too ill to throw him down the stairs!) I am to visit the sick to heal them, to release upon them the Lord's power. But I am sent to heal *all* troubles and to bind up *all* wounds and to comfort *all* sorrows, whether physical or spiritual. The priest heals—let him never forget it—not of himself, but by bringing to those who are afflicted and distressed (and most men and women are afflicted and distressed) Him who is the Great Physician, the strengthening Friend of all men. Yet I am also to be, as best I can, *alter Christus*, another Christ. Not for nothing do I don, at each offering of the Holy Sacrifice, the chief of all the eucharistic garments. The essential mass vestment is not the Chasuble (which has not always been worn at the Altar), but the Maniple. What is the Maniple? It was originally a towel. It is that wherewith a priest, in the name of the Compassionate Lord, may bind up wounds and wipe away tears. Let no priest say the Mass unless in his heart, as well as on his arm, he wears the Maniple.

“Ye see your calling, brethren.”¹⁷ “He hath called

¹⁷1 Corinthians 1:26.

us unto an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace."¹⁸ "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure."¹⁹ God is faithful, by whom I was called²⁰:

- (1) Called to be with Him,
- (2) Called to prepare His way,
- (3) Called to cast out demons,
- (4) Called to heal the sick.

¹⁸1 Timothy 1:9.

¹⁹2 Peter 1:10.

²⁰1 Corinthians 1:9.

ii

CHASTITY

THE WORLD wrongly supposes that there are properly two standards of Christian living, a low one for the laity and a high one for the clergy; and certainly all who are priests ought, ever and diligently, to combat such a false idea. Unfortunately, there have always been too many priests—who seek to put all on one level, indeed, but not by attempts to elevate the way of life of the laity to the standard of the priest; nay, rather, by willingness to modify the standard of the priest to the way of life of the laity. They seem to think that the way for the clergy to win souls is first to sink themselves to the standards of them they seek to save. Nothing could be more unfortunate than this, as a matter of wise tactics, for lay-people expect that their spiritual leaders will be much better and more spiritual men than they, or at least try very hard to become so. Not that a priest is justified in self-righteousness, or in making hypocritical pretensions. His people must know that he, too, is indeed a sinful man, one who must go to confession like every other Christian; but if in a desire to seem human, he fails to heed seriously the Lord's solemn charge in relation

to high aim, his people are sure to hold him in a contemptuous disrespect.

The charge of Jesus Himself is plain and simple: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in Heaven is perfect." And the author of the letter to the Hebrews prays that "the God of peace may make you perfect in every good work to do His will." And Peter also prays, in similar vein, that "the God of all grace may make your perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you." All Christians, indeed, are called to that perfection which is visible in Christ; all must strive toward that, and never be satisfied with anything short of it: but in such endeavour the laity rightly expect leadership in achievement from those who are presbyters, elders.

In no respect is this expectation of the people, and this desire of God, more plain than in respect to what is involved in living according to "the evangelical counsels"—Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience. As a priest I am called upon, by God and people alike, to be poor, chaste, and obedient. Only if these qualities be more patently present in priests than in other people, can they hope to persuade the laity to be, in their turn, more independent than now they are of the lure of riches, more in command of the flesh, and more humble; and only if all people, the clergy and the laity, shall in these ways develop in character, can the kingdom of God be established on earth. Let me, then, think a little about these three counsels of the Gospel,

and try in the light of them to see myself as God sees me, as the people see me, as I am, and as I may perhaps grow to be.

First of all, let me consider *chastity*. In that is involved not merely sexual continence, but also in general an independence of the domination of the flesh. To what extent have I found freedom from thralldom to my body? In other words, to what extent have I made use of ascetic discipline? Let me consider that first and then, in the light of that larger question, devote a little time to chastity in the more narrow sense of the word. And let me remember, as we think of all these things, that it is not some fellow mortal who is making inquiry of me, but the Lord Himself.

Asceticism is a most unpopular word today. It is said by many that asceticism somehow denies the goodness of the world as God made it; that it is wicked to renounce His creation or anything within it. Did not St. Peter have to be taught—it is asked—that it is wrong for a man to call anything which has come from God's hands either common or unclean? Nevertheless, and notwithstanding, asceticism is bound up inextricably with Christianity. St. Paul is only voicing what every follower of the Lord has felt to be a necessity when he declares: "So run I not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air; but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection—lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."

By that, Paul does not mean that his body is an evil thing—not at all. He means only that it is a lesser good, and that he has higher ends to pursue than are comprised in service of the body, or dictated by its desires. He is determined to make those lesser goods somehow subserve the greater ones. Life is a matter of disciplined choices, not between bad and good but between good and better. It is this way of looking at things that is back of the word “asceticism,” a word derived from a Greek word which was used to signify the disciplined training activities of an athlete. By this systematic regimen, he who would contend in the games made his body accustomed to obey his will, that at length he might receive reward of prowess. “Know ye not,” says Paul, “that they who would run in a race must go through discipline if they would be victorious, and that every boxer or wrestler, must, for the sake of effectiveness in the ring, be bodily restrained?” Nobody thinks it strange or morbid for an athlete to deny himself indulgence in food or drink or sex, that he may be in shape to contend and to win, or for one to do it that he may the better succeed in business, or that he may the better fight a battle. Only when *askesis* is undertaken for the better carrying on of God’s work do people call it wrong or unhealthy; and that simply means that they do not think that God’s work is really worth the doing.

I must “go into training,” and keep therein, if I am ever to amount to anything as a priest. “Art thou

imperious in thine appetites, O my body?" I must ask. "Have I so pampered thee that thou hast ventured to command me? I am no slave of thine. A good servant thou mayest be, but a ruinous master. Know thy place, O body formed of dust! I shall starve thee, deny thee till thou art willing to obey. Then, and only then, shall I give thee honour."

Am I soft, flabby, self-indulgent? How much fasting do I do? As much as the Church lays down for laymen—Ash Wednesday and Good Friday absolute fasts, with no food until six o'clock in the evening, except that black coffee and bread may be taken at breakfast, and water during the day,— and Lent and Fridays and Ember and Rogation Days for special abstinence? Never any more than that, for me who am a priest? Am I, then, so adequately in command of my body that with soul and body alike I surely serve the Lord? Is this so completely true that I need next to no discipline? Am I as honest about "training" as are the contenders in the Olympic Games? Yet, as Paul reminds us, "they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible." No priest amounts to much unless *askēsis* has a firm and basic place in his way of life. Do I know that? If so, what am I doing about it?

And that brings me round, in particular, to what attitude I am taking toward the appetite called sex. Sex is, in itself, the noblest appetite of them all, in that God gave it to man not for the pampering of himself

but, primarily, for the greatest of all unselfishness, the propagation of his kind. Sex is the most beautiful of all appetites, when tamed; just as it may become the most devastating, when permitted to run riot. But for all its great potentiality for good, it is a grave question whether those of us who are captains of the battling hosts of God have a right to its indulgence, even moderately and under the sanction of marriage. Of course, outside that sanction, there is nothing in the world that more quickly than sexual exercise can ruin a priest in his own sight as well as in the eyes of others. Extra-marital sexuality, I take it, everyone understands to be ruinous to priestly effectiveness in the carrying on of that redemptive enterprise in which God offers to priests a share. But even marriage is to the clergy a thing of dubious advantage.

Priests have always had considerable doubt about it. It is not for nothing that again and again in Church History there have come into being great movements of insistence upon clerical celibacy. An inner urge in that direction is always present: sometimes quiescent, sometimes strong, often prevailing. Recall how Paul, realizing all the difficulties involved, faced the problem for himself and his disciples. "Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife?" he asks; but yet he refused to do it. In this respect, so he says, he wishes others were as unmarried as himself. But he knows how hard a counsel that is. It is better, to be sure, to marry than to be forever all on fire with sexual desire.

Yet, as he goes on to advise: "Art thou bound to a wife? Seek not to be loosed"; but equally, "Art thou free from having a wife? Seek not a wife."

And why? Because "he that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: but he that is married careth for the things of the world, how he may please his wife." "I say this," he reminds them, "for your profit; not that I may cast a leash over you but for the sake of that which is reputable, that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction."

There one comes to the heart of this problem. It is not that marriage is evil, or sexual life within marriage anything but good if the marriage be indeed of the Lord. What makes marriage such a dubious business for a priest is the affectional ties incident to married love—when it is truly love and not merely animal passion made respectable. These affectional ties may, and often do, prevent a primary adherence to the Lord's cause, a whole willingness to "let wife and kindred go, this mortal life also." Those last, it is interesting to recall, were Martin Luther's words, written *after* he was married. And surely in all this we must not wholly forget what is implied in our Lord's promise: "There is no man that hath given up wife or children for My sake, but he shall receive an hundred-fold." Can I marry, I who am a priest, without contracting, in all the honesty of married love, such obligations toward my wife as may at any time make me,

and sometimes in point of fact do make me, unable completely to obey the Lord's commands? That is the whole point. If I can honestly look that Lord in the face and say, "Master Jesus, my wife and the children we have had, come strictly second, *after You*—if you tell me to go anywhere, I shall go—" if I can say that to my Master and mean it, then marriage has been, and is to me, no hindrance.

How many, many married priests there are who now realize with shame that unhappy state of division into which marriage has brought their ministry—all unwitting in the beginning that it could possibly be so; whose minds are divided, their inner honesty bruised, their families feeling the strain in the father's spirit (though he tries to hide it from them), and their hearts near breaking! They have heard the call from the Lord to come to Him for some special and difficult service, but have been compelled to answer, "I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come." How many there are who dare not listen for the Lord's direction, knowing that if they hear and heed, there will come heartbreak for wife, for child, for self! Pity them! Pray for them! They are tortured souls. Happy, O how happy, are those clerical marriages that involve as completely the oblation of a wife's life as of one's own, and the voluntary oblation of one's growing children, too! But how rare, how very rare they are! And even if one has found such a marriage for one's self, one knows how much a thing of chance it was that he

married such a woman or begat such children, and that it all turned out so happily.

Let a man examine himself; and, if he be married, find himself not honest before the Lord, or of divided mind (as between the Lord on one hand and his wife and children on the other), let him ask God what he is to do about it. Solve his problem that man must, somehow! Let him put it before God; and then let him do what he is told by his God to do. It may involve a complete reorganization of home and family life, no matter at what cost in tears. Too much to ask, that last? Then why, O priest, did you stand before your Bishop and hear him solemnly ask you if you would be "diligent to frame and fashion your own selves *and your families* according to the teaching of Christ;" and then say, "I will apply myself thereto, the Lord being my helper"? Rest assured that, until a priest has faced and somehow solved the problems involved in chastity and marriage, solved them so that—unquestionably—the Lord comes first, that priest remains a poor, weak, failing creature, suspect of his fellow-men, accused by self, condemned of God.

Sometimes we are told that our Anglican communion allows priests freely to marry. That is not so, if by it is meant that a priest can marry when, whom, and as he pleases. The Article (it is No. xxxii), reads: "Bishops, Priests and Deacons are not commanded by God's law, either to vow the estate of single life, or to ab-

stain from marriage: therefore it is lawful for them . . . to marry at their own discretion *as they shall judge the same to serve better to Godliness.*" Those last words qualify the whole permission.

Lord, guide Thou those Thy torn and troubled priests who have married lightly, or who otherwise have judged ill in respect to their wives. Lord, save us all both from incontinence and from a heart divided. So must we pray; nor should we neglect of our charity also to intercede, in understanding compassion, for all the wives and children of the married clergy.

This matter of clerical marriage, and all that it involves, is of primary import for those who would serve the Lord under His Orders, and this more especially now that the Church seems once again to be approaching a great purgation that may easily involve great suffering for priests, and possibly the danger of violence and death.



POVERTY

THE EVANGELICAL Counsels are not directed only to monks and nuns but to every one who would be a priest of God, a prophet of His justice and love, and a pastor in the Church of God. They are, indeed, counsels for the laity as well, to be heeded, as far as may be, by all the sons and daughters of God. The second of these counsels bids all men to seek with joy a voluntary Poverty.

"Blessed are ye poor," says the Lord to us, "for yours is the Kingdom of Heaven." "We are to be," says Paul, "as poor, yet making many rich." James inquires, "Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the Kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him?" "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich." "A rich man," the Lord assures us, "shall hardly enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God." "Woe unto you that are rich, for ye have received your consolation." "The rich," sings

our Lady, "He hath sent empty away." Paul warns Timothy, saying, "They that wish to be rich fall into temptation and into a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition, for the love of money"—not alone the possession of it, we must note, but also the desire for it—"is the root of many kinds of evil: money, which while some coveted after, they erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee from these things!" In the Parable of the Sower, it is the care for worldly things and the deceitfulness of riches which kill the Seed, and so we become unfruitful. "The covetous man," Paul tells us, "is an idolater"; and he classes this covetous man with the whoremonger, as "having no inheritance with the saints in light." The Psalmist, in the tenth psalm, tells us that while it is true that the ungodly speak well of him that covets riches, yet God *abhors* that same covetous man. Would a man follow Jesus? "The foxes have holes, the birds nests; but the Son of Man hath nowhere to lay His head." Shall not I, who would preach His wisdom to the world and offer to that world His grace, also be a poor man?

I am not to despise or condemn other men because they are rich. Rather, I must pity them, because of the great difficulty they are under in attainment of God's salvation. Jesus looked on the rich young man with sorrow, for He loved him. But I must not admire the rich because they are rich, or let them think that I

esteem their wealth to be anything but impediment to their spiritual welfare, unless, indeed, they may be persuaded to give it away, (not to me but to them that have need). Certainly in no circumstances must I myself be content to remain wealthy, or be desirous of obtaining riches. And why? First, because it is the pursuit of wealth, or the desire to hold on to it when one has gained it, which more than all things else makes men hard and cruel, and so prevents the coming in of social justice and the reign of mutual affection. Who have been the great upbuilders of a true Society? Not the rich, nor them who covet money. And second, even more important, because riches or the wish for them withdraws the soul from full pursuit of God, His love, and Heaven. "Ye cannot serve God *and* money," says Jesus.

Have the saints been people rich in this world's goods? No. Either they have been poor men and women, and content to remain so; or if they have been well-off to start with, they did not proceed far on the way of God-service before they found that their money had to go from their possession and control. The Apostles were poor men. Our Lady was a country carpenter's wife, who did her own work and had nothing—nothing but God. And so it was with Paul and Ambrose and Augustine and Jerome and Benedict and Bernard and Anselm and Boniface and Little Brother Francis and Clare, and Dominic, and Catherine of Siena, and Bonaventura, and Aquinas, and Theresa,

and John of the Cross, and Thomas à Becket, and Loyola, and Huvelin, and the Curé d' Ars, and James Huntington. So it has been with all who have mattered much with God. "What went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Lo, such are in kings' houses," but not, with propriety or profit, in the house of the King of kings. I who am a priest am called to be a poor man. Poverty is the condition of my effectiveness, a glory round about me, to be desired and prayed for above all manner of riches.

Perhaps, sometimes, the priest feels inclined to say, "I know all that; and behold in me the poor man that is required. I am underpaid enough, Heaven knows. Look, Lord; I have forsaken all to follow Thee." Let him remember that he is not speaking only to be heard of men. Perhaps to say such things even to them would be not without its dangers. Does the priest seem to them to be a poor man? In the eyes of a wealthy minority of them, possibly so. But a priest who has a salary of, say, \$30.00 a week, with a house thrown in free (no rent or taxes to pay), with a pension when he is old or something for his widow when he dies, and with security of employment in all seasons, year after year, does such a one seem poor to the average workman? Yet few priests get less, and many get many times that amount. But it is not merely to men that we are saying that we are poor, but to Jesus, to Him who, counting it no robbery to be equal with God, nevertheless emptied Himself and became truly poor,

having no place of His own in which to lay His head. Can I honestly look Him in the face and say, "I, your priest, am a poor, underfed, homeless man. I have forsaken all, to follow Thee." Dare I talk to Him in that fashion?

Our Lord understands, well enough, the difficulty in which a priest, especially an American Anglican priest, finds himself in respect to poverty. He knows all things. He is well aware of how, in this matter as in others, I am an heir of a bad tradition. I am the child, and my people are the children, of a late past that has demanded that the clergy be not priests, but rather parsons, respectable guardians of things respectable, and living as such. In nothing is the restoration of Catholicism in our communion more difficult than in this matter of clerical living. Jesus knows that. He knows, also, that many of us who now stand at the altars became priests before ever we began to question these customary clerical expectations. We set up our households, quite unthinkingly, on anything but a truly priestly basis. Now we find ourselves in the grip of inertia, which to break suddenly would do more harm than good, not so much to ourselves as to others. Jesus knows all that, and He wishes us to know that He knows it. But nevertheless, the call to a poverty like His keeps coming to us, most disturbingly. The least I can do is to make every possible effort to emancipate myself, as quickly and wholly as may indeed be possible, from that worldliness which makes

parsons out of priests, that worldiness which may so easily destroy me, too. One of the things that I must seriously think about is how I may more and more simplify my living and enlarge for myself the blessed freedom due to poverty, real poverty.

How can my house be run less elaborately, and at less expense? Can I not make my people understand that it is unseemly for me, as a priest, to entertain elaborately? I must have my people in to see me, to be sure. I must be given to hospitality. But surely they and I must know that it is to be a hospitality wherein spirit bulks large and material things count for little. Surely they will understand that, if I am patient in explaining. Do I need a motor-car? If I must and do drive one, do I really need a new one? Do I dress as inexpensively as is consistent with neatness and decency? Such economies I must seek, not that I may save money, not merely that I may have more to give away, but that I may be free from thralldom to wealth. And what about savings? Have I a right to save money at all? My Master tells me to take no thought for the morrow. Do I take thought, in spite of Him? Is that not a grievous sin? These are some of the questions—I can easily think of many more of a similar sort—that I must ask myself. Let me not postpone this vital sort of self-examination, for the worldly world is a very insidious enemy. Almost before we know it, that worldly world grips us in a ruinous embrace; and when that happens, our usefulness is mostly gone.

"When the salt has lost its saltiness," says the Lord, "it is good for nothing but—the dung-hill."

There are, however, still deeper phases of this great virtue called poverty. *In Mount St. Michel and Chartres*, in a remarkable essay on St. Francis of Assisi, Henry Adams has written, "His knights of the Round Table hid themselves for training in deserts of poverty, simplicity, humility, innocence of self, absorption in nature, in the silence and love of God, and, above all, in love and joy incarnate, whose only influence was example. Poverty of body in itself mattered nothing; what Francis wanted was poverty of pride." Not only does the Lord say, "Blessed are ye poor," but also "Blessed are the poor in spirit."

The thing that transforms Poverty from a cold and lifeless thing into something beautiful and lovely is humility and self-forsakingness. Let a man be poor *in his desire*, and poverty becomes warm, alive and joyful. Let a man but honestly say, as Francis always did, "I am nothing. I am less than the least of men. It is only as God makes me His troubadour and His instrument that I have significance. Therefore, of course I am poor—poor and content, for I desire no more,"—let a priest once believe that, and the problem of poverty is on its way to a good solution.

I note in particular one phrase in that characterization by Henry Adams of the life of the Little Poor Men: "in love and joy incarnate, whose only influence was example." That goes deep. No priest is really

poor in spirit until he has come to the place where he understands that it is not his preaching and ministration, his attempting to form other lives according to his own wisdom, that helps the world, but only the fact that he cares for His people, with an all-consuming love so great that his only influence, the only one that needs to be or can be, is example. Am I like that? Or is what poverty I possess a thing only of externals, while my heart hoards pride?

It takes a good deal of wisdom, not to speak of God's grace, for a priest to see that no one is good enough to live another's life for him—or for her. Experience ought to teach a priest that. Again and again he has tried to interfere in other peoples' lives, with the best of intentions. How many times has it done any good? Yet he keeps on trying, chalking up his failures to the ungrateful stupidity of his people, rather than to the badness of his technique. The shepherd goes before his sheep. They love him, trust him, follow him. He leads. He never drives. It is only the man poor in spirit, he who thinks himself not much, or much deserving, who has the wisdom and grace never to drive others, or even to try to do so. It is not only God who resists the proud; it is also everybody here on earth. To be, to love, and not to ask reward, not even the reward of having followers—that is to be truly poor.

How can I come to that poverty of spirit? Not by thinking all the while of whether I am that way or not. Not by thinking of myself at all, but by forgetting

myself, by losing myself. So did Francis. I may give myself to God in nature, losing myself in its beauty, which is His beauty. I may give myself to God in the arts, losing myself in that beauty, which is His beauty. I may give myself to God in noble thought and concord of sound words, losing myself in their beauty which is His beauty. I may give myself to God as He is revealed in the eyes of His children, losing myself in that great beauty which is His beauty. I may give myself to God directly, in prayer and in the Holy Sacrifice, lost in the divine beauty which there glows through the last thin veil of sense. So may I become truly lost, and be found. So may I know that I am nothing, and that God is all. Then I shall no longer coerce, nor seek to coerce. Then I shall be poor in spirit, truly a priest. But yet forget not, O my soul, that such poverty of spirit can not be real if thou attempt to live thy life entangled in thy physical possessions.

Finally, let me remember that poverty is no thing of negation, no thing lifeless and cold. Francis, when he wed Lady Poverty, was not espoused to a corpse. He who is nothing, *he shall have heart's desire*. "Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath forsaken house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, for My sake and the Gospel's, but he shall receive an hundred-fold, now in this time, and in the world to come eternal life." As sang Brother Giles, "Poverty is a secret heaven, concealed from

them that dwell content amid the shadows of earth. In that Heaven of Poverty, the things which seem to be are not, so high is He that is. There man's contentions die. No term this Heaven has, nor measurement. There lives love, without desire of love. There night is become bright day. Poverty is to have nothing, nay, more, to be naught, to be found. Poverty, having nothing, possesses all things. This is the true heaven, here and hereafter. May we come unto it, now and evermore." And again,

"When man is brought to Nothingness,
In him is born the eye to see.
Then first he feels his endless bliss:
No tongue can tell this mystery."*

I may seem to have come a long way from the thought of how I may cut my household expenses, the question whether or not I shall drive the old car another year, the matter of how best to be content with my wages, and the like. But who may despise the necessary beginnings, or seek to soar on angel's wings who cannot first walk on his two feet. No poverty of heavenly beauty will ever be possible for me if the poverty of self-denial be unpracticed day by day. How can I lead men into a Heaven that is eternal joy, when I myself am bound, hand and foot, by longing to possess the riches of earth? I am dedicated to Him who has nothing of this world's wealth. Yet I grasp

* From *Brother John*, by Vida D. Scudder.

avidly at those very goods that He held not, and seek for myself (and also for His Church) that which He never sought. Because of this men look at Him, they look at me; and will have none of Him at my hands. People understand these inconsistencies. And God, too, understands. But I, I have understood but little.

OBEDIENCE

THE THIRD of the Evangelical Counsels is that I shall be obedient.

That is the hardest of the three counsels for any man to follow. It is difficult to make oblation of the human will. To deny the flesh is not easy; to deny the world for most people is even harder; but to deny *one's self* is almost impossible, except with grace from God. It goes against everything we have been taught about successful living. To follow obedience is to deny the validity of contemporary wisdom. The ordinary man of today, brought up to regard self-expression as an indispensable virtue, even as a solemn duty, may come, indeed, to see that asceticism, the taming of the flesh, is necessary, because by way of it a man may gain freedom for a more true liberty to do and to be what he wills. That same modern man may also be persuaded of the wisdom of the counsel against the world, since possessions do possess and curb one's ability to do what one desires. But when that modern man comes to this third counsel, when he is told that it is imperative that he renounce his self-expressive freedom altogether, and obey a will outside his own, then he re-

bels. That seems to him sheer madness, suicidal folly, the self-destruction of all that makes him significant. It is here, rather than in respect to flesh or riches, that our religion has its deepest contention with the world of today. That struggle need not worry us. It can have but one final outcome. But it is a struggle inevitable and fundamental. Let me not avoid it, either in my ministry to others or in my own life.

It is not really I that rules my life; it is not I that fixes my destiny. No man is master of his fate or captain of his soul. Indeed, it is not even the whole race of human beings that rules the universe, or determines the future even of man. There is One who sits serene between the cherubim, be the earth never so unquiet, One who makes and rules all things that are for His own changeless purpose. Among the things that He controls is man. To human beings He does, indeed, grant a certain freedom of will; but not freedom to do as they please, only freedom to obey or disobey His inevitable desire. What His will is, He has revealed. We come to understand it, first of all, by observation of the trial and error recorded in past history. Secondly, it is made plain to us by the insights of the prophets, poets, and seers. Wholly He has revealed it in Himself Incarnate. Interpretatively, God the Holy Ghost keeps on unfolding it, guiding His Church and us within it, as by promise. In all these ways, God has shown us what is His law for man. We can obey, or, for the moment at least, we can disobey; but we

can no more defy that will of God for us without ultimate disaster than can electrons within the atom defy Him, or the stars in their courses, or the birds. Man's obedience is more beautiful than theirs, for they *cannot* rebel and man *can*. Man can choose. But if he chooses wrongly, he perishes at last, as all else must perish that defies the inevitable and benevolent Law-giver. God reigns.

To them who would obey, and who repent their disobedience, there is peace, there is safety—and to them alone. Not safety in the sense that here on earth the wicked who disobey God may not rise in might and send to death those who obey, but safety from being cast by God, at the end, into that deep destruction which is Hell. "Fear not him that killeth the body," says Jesus, "and who then can do no more. Fear him who can destroy both body and soul in Hell. Aye, I say unto you, fear him." And not peace, in the sense of absence of conflict, or mere pleasantness of circumstance. Peace, rather, in a knowing of unity with That which Is, unity between the creature and the Creator.

Do I understand all that? Am I sure that I do? Lest I make any mistake about it, let me look with clear perception upon Jesus, whose priest I am, Captain General of the forces in which I have a subsidiary command. Behold Him!

Behold one who is completely obedient! "This Jesus, being in the form of God, thought it not a snatching

at honour to be equal with God; yet He emptied Himself and became of no reputation and took upon Himself the form of a servant, and was found in the likeness of man; and, being found in fashion of a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient, yes, even to the death of the Cross." So says Paul. And again we read of Him, "Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered." Obedience to what? Not to some arbitrary daemon. Obedience, rather, to the changeless law which, by divine will and in the divine and eternal plan of God, determines the nature of man. To God-created human destiny He, in His manhood, became obedient; that He might show forth perfection of manhood—a perfection not passively accepted but rather achieved dynamically, by cooperation between the human and the divine.

What am I meant to be? What is the law governing my life, which to obey is to live, to disobey is to die?

The great seers of religion, however else they may have differed one from another, have shared in one perception: that God is an *urgent* spirit: not the creator of a static universe—there is no such universe; but One whose dynamic word impels a universe. Since this is true, man, who may become in little what God is *in esse*, finds meaning only to the extent that he, too, outbreathes himself selflessly, creatively.

Such likeness to God may not be had by man except at the price of self-oblation. Man must rise above

lure of self-will and make venture in love. To do that always means to suffer, to be met by the uncomprehending antagonism of the impercipient many, the hatred of them who can not stand the thought that any should escape the bondage which they know confines themselves. On the road to meaning, the Cross therefore becomes an inevitability. Our Lord knew well that in His humanity, if He were wholly to do the will of God, He must love completely; and He knew that such a doing meant Calvary. There was a price to pay. There is a price to pay, by all who would follow Him.

Do I realize and gladly acknowledge that I too must obey, live selflessly, suffer in the doing of it and that without complaint? Is Jesus who is completely obedient indeed my King, whose man I am, commanding my life, my body, and soul? Am I ready to go His way, regardless of earthly gain or human applause, to my Golgathas and Mounts of the Skull? Let me hear Him. "My teaching is not mine, but His that sent Me. If any man will do His will, He shall know of the truth of the doctrine." "Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is My brother and My sister and My mother." "I came from Heaven not to do Mine own will but the will of Him that sent Me." "My meat is to do His will." "As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you." "When ye pray, say Father, Thy will be done, as in Heaven, so in earth."

If I am ever to become truly obedient to the will of

God, it is important that I have constant practice in the submerging of my own will. For that reason, so the saints tell me, and so reason would tell me even though there were no saintly testimony to instruct me, it is important that I should, as far as possible, learn gladly to obey other people, except indeed when their commands are plainly contrary to the law of God Himself. The value of monastic obedience lies in that. It is not merely that by obedience to a superior "the religious" is made more efficient in labor. More than that, the monk learns, through obeying his superior, not to seek to have his or her own way, not to aggrandize his own will. Having thus learned the habit of obedience, a religious becomes more tractable as he listens for the voice of God.

I am a secular priest, not a monk; but that does not free me from obedience. By solemn ordination oath, I am bound to obey at least one human being, my bishop. I am of course not bound to obey him if he tells me to do what is contrary to God's word or contrary to what God's Holy Spirit has revealed to the Church Catholic. The bishop does not sit in God's throne. But in all matters of discipline not plainly contrary to the Faith, I am under obligation to obey. I am to obey without question and without complaint. Even if my bishop were to be unjust, all the more completely am I to obey him. I am to be subject to him with all fear, not only to the good and gentle father-in-God, but also to the perverse one. I may protest

against harsh treatment by a bishop, but *only to that bishop or to God*. If the bishop be a mean man, or foolish, or spiteful, or even cruel, God will judge him "in that day." Meanwhile, he is to be obeyed, unless he commands wickedness or bids me to fail to do my spiritual duty. Obedience to my bishop is necessary: first (and less) for the efficiency of the Church as a fighting force on behalf of righteousness; second (and more) that I may learn thereby not to be wilful in my approach to Him who is Chief Bishop and Shepherd, the Lord Christ Himself.

That is a hard saying to Anglican priests. We hold our bishops in a strange contempt, disobeying their admonitions and criticising their decisions to every one except to themselves. This makes for scandal. Just as the "non-religious" are horrified to hear a monk grumbling against his superior and implying that the superior is in many ways a fool, when all the time we know that the monk has promised to honour and obey that superior, even so non-Christians are scandalized by the impudence of me or of any other priest to his bishop, when all the while they know that he has promised to obey that bishop. But more important still, every time a priest asserts himself against his spiritual pastors and masters, that priest waters and cultivates within him the evil plant called Pride.

Even as I must learn to obey my bishop, so also I must learn to obey Holy Church and honour her accumulated wisdom. Holy Church tells me, for ex-

ample, to say my Mass, daily if possible. Often I feel like saying No. I prefer not to do it. But I must obey. Holy Church tells me to fast. I am tempted on occasion to say No. But I must obey. Holy Church points out to me many tried and tested ways toward God. I frequently desire to have none of them. At the moment they do not happen to appeal to me. This is sheer wilfulness. "Be not wise in your own conceits."

If I have learned to forget my own will, by way of obedience to my bishop, by way of obedience to the Church, and most of all by way of obedience to the voice of God, then, it may be, I shall cease trying to exert my will in attempts to coerce other people. It is no part of a priest's duty to live another man's life for him, another woman's life for her, even a small child's life for him or her. "My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that ye shall receive the greater condemnation." One is our Master and their Master, even Jesus Christ. That is certainly one of the hardest lessons for him to learn who would share the priesthood of Christ. Yet it must be learned. Look at the Lord's own earthly ministry. He did not tell men that they *must* do this, or not do that. He never intruded Himself upon an unwilling soul. He was firm, but never toward any that had not asked for direction—and even to them He gave counsel, not peremptory command. He was patient, with the patience of God. He did not resist men. He never coerced anybody, nor tried to coerce them. Am I that wise? Is that the way

I handle a vestry, or a guild, or penitents in the confessional? Am I trying only to help people to seek God's direction, or do I try to do their thinking for them, make up their minds for them, solve their problems myself? "Ah," I seek to persuade myself, "you must command or you can do nothing." When I hear a voice telling me that, it is the voice of Satan. If God has been patient with me, not driving me but waiting for me, loving me, helping me to interpret life as it unfolds (and with what one of us has God not dealt so?), shall I deal otherwise with the sheep of the flock? "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; but it shall not be so with you."

Let me obey, then, but do little or no commanding. It is the will of God that I live lovingly, creatively, and bear without surprise or resentment the Cross that is the price of so living in the midst of a rebellious world. Let me obey, that the world may be redeemed—redeemed by His great love, to which is added my own too small and insufficient love. That I may learn to obey God, and not be wilful, let me reverently obey my bishop, as I promised to do at my priesting. Lest I be led hither and yon, by the sleight of man or my own foolish cleverness, let me bend my will in obedience to that great company of the faithful, God's Holy Catholic Church. Then having made the necessary sacrifice, the great and difficult bending of my stubborn will, I shall, it may be, find myself content no longer to coerce one single child of God, but rather to per-

suade men unto Him, the more by virtue of my own humility.

Hear the words of the Lord Jesus, quoting Isaiah the prophet, words wherein He describes the only effective priesthood: "Behold My servant, whom I have chosen; the beloved in whom My soul is well pleased; I will put My spirit upon him, and he shall show judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not strive nor cry out, nor cause his voice to be heard, complaining in the streets. A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax he shall not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory."

For pride is a necklace of steel round about my neck, and anklets holding fast my feet, whereby I am kept back from Heaven and, it may be, shall be dragged at last forever down to Hell. For my sake, therefore, for the sake of the people committed to me, for God's own sake, I pray that He may take away my pride.

b

PRAYER

PROBABLY the impression that most people have of the earthly ministry of the Lord is that it was made up of an immense activity, of good deeds done incessantly, and all this punctuated by times of withdrawal for quiet and prayer. It is doubtful if that is the impression we should get were we to read the Gospel records for the first time and without a background of preconceived ideas. If one tries so to read them, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that Jesus lived a life primarily of meditation and prayer; that His most real moments, and most of His moments, were spent in a life hidden with God; and that it was His moments of activity which were the interludes, interjections between periods of contemplation and self-oblation. May not the degree to which I have gone from much activity to occasional prayer, rather than from much prayer to occasional activity, be a measure of my failure? The Lord would seem to have indicated that danger, in what He said to Martha and Mary at Bethany. It is not to be supposed that Mary was less industrious than her sister. But the Master was come. First, Mary would talk with Him, then get dinner.

Martha would go rather from dinner to converse. "Martha, thou art cumbered. Mary hath chosen that good part." Prayer first, activity second and as flowing from prayer—that is the Christian way and, with especial pertinency, the priestly way. Let me think, then, of my praying.

Let me not devote my time to any defense of prayer. I am a Christian, long since convinced that prayer is not only answerable but answered, not merely useful but necessary, not so much in conformity with nature as of the nature of nature. There are people, I know, who still are unconvinced about all that; but not I. I have come far from those earlier days of battle about prayer, of conflicts within myself against the pressures of a secularized prejudice. Defense of prayer I must engage in, but only before the unbelieving world; and even in that company the best defense of prayer is the man who prays! Nor is it advisable that I here recall, hastily and imperfectly, what has been written of the technic of prayer by others far more able than myself. Their books I have read and can read again when I will. Here and now it is more profitable that I think of priestly prayer. In such a consideration, I can do nothing better, first of all, than spend some moments in looking at the prayer-life, and the prayers, of Him who is High-Priest and Captain of Salvation, of Him whose ordained servant I am. Then I may go on to a thought or two about the ancient formulas of prayer.

Only twice, at least that we have record, did Jesus feel any ecstatic emotion in prayer; only twice did He have what is sometimes called "a mystical moment." The rest of the time His talking with God was like almost all our own, unemotional, matter-of-fact, without any particular excitement to it or from it. One of those exceptional moments was at His Baptism; the other, on the Mount of Transfiguration. He knew, quite well, that prayer, like religion generally, does not very often result in exaltations, that prayer is much more a matter of oblation of the human will to the Divine Will, than of feeling. That, I must never forget.

We do forget it. We sentimentalize the whole relationship between God and ourselves. One hears people say that they have ceased to go to Church because they find that "it leaves them cold." Philosophers sometimes think that "religion is essentially a thing of the emotions." And we may be sure that there are even clergymen who do not say their prayers "too often," for fear those prayers may not continue vividly to move their hearts if frequently repeated. All these opinions are variants of one confusion of mind, a confusion deadly to the spiritual life. Such notions would spoil any sort of intimate personal relationship. The man who thinks of his loves primarily in terms of feeling is a low fellow. Sentimentality is a poor substitute for loving someone better than one's self.

To love God means to put Him first, to will one's life to Him. If it be so that God gives, sometime, a

moment or two of ecstatic happiness, that is His good gift; but such a thing is never frequent, nor is it necessary. There were for our Lord only two brief experiences of such rapture, once when the Spirit came on Him like a dove and once when all was white and glistening upon a mountain-top. But *He prayed always*. So must I, putting God's will first and forgetting altogether my emotional intensities.

Secondly, let me recall that Jesus prayed much for God's people, and only three times for Himself. Even then, it was not for wealth or comfort or ease or health or applause or promotion or love from others that He prayed. The first time was in a Garden, where, foreseeing His dreadful passion on the morrow, His spirit was in such agony that the sweat was on Him like great drops of blood. And what was the prayer? It was the same that He had taught His followers, that time they asked Him, saying "Teach us to pray," and He replied, bidding them use the words: "Our Father, which art in Heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, as in Heaven so in earth." "Father," said He on Olivet, "if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless, not as I will but as Thou wilt." "O My Father, if this cup may not pass away from Me except I drink it, Thy will be done." There is a picture of that praying which hangs in the National Gallery in London, painted by El Greco, of such mystic power as makes it one of the great achievements of man's brush. In the background,

in a whirling sort of cave, unreal, are the three sleeping disciples. A strange light shines upon the Lord. In the distance before Him is a Cross, with something hung thereon. Above Him an angel, abstract and super-human, holds out, inevitably, a chalice. In all, even in the landscape, there is the strain of struggle—everywhere except on our Lord's face as He looks up. On that face is such an entire self-surrender as transcends struggle without denying its reality. That was the first time that He prayed for Himself. The second time was on the Cross: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" an agonized cry for succor lest, in the supreme moment, He should trust in His mere human strength, and fail. And the third time was at the moment of His death, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." And those are the *only recorded prayers of Jesus for Himself*.

He was always praying for others. Before He began His ministry, thinking of them at Capernaum, "He went out into a desert place, rising early in the morning, and there He prayed." Before He called the Twelve "He went up into a mountain to pray, and spent the whole night in prayer to God." "When He had given thanks, looking up into Heaven, He blessed and broke the loaves," and fed the five thousand. "And after that He had dismissed them, He fled again into the mountains to pray, Himself alone." "And in the way, as He was praying, He asked His disciples, 'Whom do men say that I am?'" "Simon, Simon, I

have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." "I pray for them whom Thou has given Me." "I pray that Thou wouldest keep them from the evil." "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." "While He was blessing them, He was raised up and was carried into Heaven." "He ever liveth to make intercession for them that come to God by Him."

Thirdly, one cannot but get the impression that our Lord spent much time in listening to God. That showed itself in the entire sureness that was His when at last He acted. We are not to suppose that this sureness was merely an inevitable corollary of the consubstantial union existing between the Eternal Son and the Eternal Father. That is too greatly to simplify the matter. In His humanity Jesus needed guidance, and so He prayed. If you will, He prayed through His own divinity; but He prayed. He shared our need of direction. To suppose else is to render Gethsemane mere play-acting and the Cross a mummerly; and that would be blasphemous. Jesus prayed, and Jesus listened for the Father's answer. Indeed, from the counsel He gave His Apostles, His praying must have been more listening than speaking. He told them: "When you pray, speak not much, as the heathen do, for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye like unto them, for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him." One may be sure that when He Himself prayed, He said what He had to say, simply and once.

If, as a priest, I would heed the example of my Lord, I shall be careful: *first*, that I pray not for the sake of spiritual thrills but for the offering of my own will, and for the getting done, by God's released power, of those things which ought to be done; *secondly*, that I pray much for others in the Lord and never for myself, except for daily bread and for self-oblation to the Divine will; *thirdly*, that I bring the objects of my prayer to the good God without a multiplicity of words or elaborateness of style, and, having done it so, be quiet and await God's pleasure.

Let me continue my thought by a brief remembrance of the various kinds of prayer, and a noting of how all of them may be made to center about the Church's regular and systematic set of Offices.

First, *vocal prayer*. That is the most elementary sort of prayer, in which we say words, usually words composed by them of old time, and into them seek to inject our own desires and needs. There are those who regard such praying as impossibly immature, who say that this sort of thing may be all right for people of very low mentality but, as for them, they will at once go on to things more noble. Theirs is a curious sort of spiritual pride. The saints, even those who have progressed to the highest forms of contemplation, have nevertheless kept up their use of vocal prayer, particularly the words of David. By doing it they were sure, at least, never to lose touch with their more pedestrian brethren. By doing it they also found food for the high-

er sorts of prayer, and schooling in how to put deep thoughts into simple language. The heart of such praying has best been found in the Psalms, almost every one of which deeply, movingly expresses, with honest directness, the needs and fears and joys and dependencies of all of us. What better words can possibly be found into which I may put to God my common aspirations? The ancient collects, plus *Te Deum*, plus the songs of Zacharias and Simeon and, above all, plus Mary's own Psalm, the Magnificat, make daily devotions most fair and helpful. Where else can one find words that say so much, so beautifully, as day follows day? After awhile, one grows to love the daily Offices, expectant of old loveliness that will return tomorrow or next week. Into one's mind and speech and heart sinks home the beauty of the Psalter.

Second, *meditative or discursive prayer*. One takes some event, utterance, character, and exposes it to all the activities of the mind. First, one recreates by imagination every aspect of that which is to be meditated upon, until one lives for one's self that which once was and is now recorded. Then one brings to bear the reason, asking what the meaning may be of the now realized experience, and its relation to other experiences. Then one calls in the emotions, and asks, "What do I feel about this, if anything? and if I feel nothing at all, just why is that? and need I feel about it?" Lastly, one approaches it all with one's will, and makes a resolution that comes out of what has gone

before. There are various methods of doing this sort of thing. Surely every priest that takes his vocation seriously uses some one of them. Whatever method I choose to follow, there is always the necessity to decide *upon what* I am to meditate. Left to myself, I am apt to turn my thoughts too exclusively toward those elements of the Christian faith, those things in the Christian records, which happen to appeal to me. So it is likely to be with all priests. Dr. A meditates on Calvary at the expense of the Sermon on the Mount; Father B, *vice versa*; Father C picks always those passages in our Lord's life that show His transcendence, and ignores those where Jesus is limited and cramped by the infirmities incident to the Incarnation; Dr. D meditates on Jesus the Comrade and never on Jesus the King. We need a balanced ration. Consecutive Bible-reading alone can give that balance. To accept the help of regular and systematic Offices is to find one's meditative prayer both easier and better rounded than in any other way.

Third, *affective prayer*. This comes from one who is truly in love with God. It flows freely, without direction save that of the heart. The trouble about it, the thing that makes it difficult even for an adept, and definitely dangerous for a beginner, is that it degenerates with startling facility into the deadliest sentimentality. It too easily becomes the utterance not of what one feels but, rather, of what one thinks one ought to feel. It is a whipping-up of laggard love.

There may be those who are so deeply spiritual, and so overwhelmingly God-possessed, that they may safely begin their praying with affective prayer. I doubt greatly if there can be many such priests. Even the greatest saints—Augustine, Bernard, Teresa, for example—were not wont to do it. They began with lesser prayer and then, using it, let the affective approaches begin. If zeal of love grew cold, they stopped at once and resumed the lesser, formal prayer, again to rise from a new base. The greatest and easiest matrix from which spurts of affection may rise, is the Psalter. Says Augustine, "The voices of the Psalms and Canticles flowed into my ears, and distilled into my heart, whence my affections and devotion overflowed." Bernard speaks of how, as he says his office, the tenderness of a word, the sweetness of a phrase, releases his heart upward to Heaven. The daily Office, then, is not some mere routine and form of words, nor only a meditative manual, but an honest, homely base from which to start in the practice of the love of God.

Fourth, *contemplative prayer*. This is prayer truly mystical, prayer in which one wholly loses one's self and finds one's self in a complete and absorbing unity with God. Very few have much of it. I myself have known it only once, nearly thirty years ago; and then it was not of my seeking but a sudden, unexpected gift from God Himself. That is, of course, the secret about contemplative prayer. It is not to be obtained by

seeking it. One may rightly long for what it gives, but never may one demand it. It is worth noting how many of the contemplative saints have found that the gift comes, when it does come, most easily when obediently one has said the lesser prayers, during or immediately after the saying of formal offices. Nor has any successful contemplative ever, in desire of the joys of unitive prayer, either neglected or despised the daily "hours." Neither, then, may I who, beside such geniuses in Godliness, am only a little child in the spiritual life.

Let me say my Office, then. Let me use their ancient and beautiful words as vehicles for my own poor thoughts, and find myself thereby in fellowship with all who use them now and with all the holy ones who, having used them in the days gone by, are come close to God in Paradise. Let me use them, too, as manuals of meditation, taking some part each day as a basis for discursive prayer. Let me say them in such wise that from time to time my soul may dart in happy love straight up to God, and yet come back before affection can grow artificial. Let me say them with devout hope that, in His own good time, God will make Himself known to me as He is, in contemplation, in mystic unity—here on earth, perhaps, and then after this life, till I come at last to know even as I am known.

Unless I am a man of prayer, I shall be a dull, stupid, it may be even wicked priest. "Lord, teach me to pray," I ask of Him who is Master. "I have taught

you, already," surely He is saying. "Not merely the words of *Pater Noster* have I taught you. I have instructed you also by My own example, by the record of My own praying. I have taught you, also, by the long and wise experience of the Saints, out of whose praying, as they were led by the Holy Ghost, came the old devotions of 'the day-by-day.' I should not ask you to say those ancient Offices, had you not asked Me how to pray."

REDEEMER

LET me think for awhile about the three great *functions* of Lord Jesus; functions perfectly performed by Him; functions given by Him to Christians to perform, and more particularly to priests; functions which we do not always recognize as ours and, even when we do, are apt imperfectly to understand. Our Lord and Master, before whom I sit at this moment, is Redeemer and Teacher and Sanctifier. Let me consider these in order; and first of all let me meditate upon what is meant by being a *Redeemer*.

I

First, let me contemplate the terrible tragedy of sin.

(a) Only man is capable of sinning. Sin is the deliberate refusal to make oblation of one's being to the will of God; and of all the creatures in Heaven or earth, only man ever makes that refusal, or indeed can make it. Every other thing, animate or inanimate, obeys without question the law made by the Eternal for its governance. Each thing that is, fulfils its God-appointed destiny with no rebellion. Only man revolts. Only man denies the law of God, does it even when he knows it to be the law of God. God gave to

us the precious gift of free will; but the condition necessarily inherent in the power of choice is that we may choose wrongly; and again and again we do. As the virtue of a freely chosen obedience makes possible for us a higher place in the eternal scheme of things than mere compelled obedience can bestow, so is our damnation the greater when we choose to disobey.

(b) Let us never forget that our human free-will, that highest of all God's gifts in creation, is not a free-will to do with safety whatever we desire. Far from it! We may choose, truly, but only as to whether we shall obey God and live, or disobey God and perish. Plain to us from history, plain from revelation, too, is God's law for human beings. It is His decree that we become great, and mutually safe, by way of sacrificial self-discipline in love; or else small, and mutually destructive, by way of greed and will to power.

Woe to mankind! We have chosen wrongly. We have sinned against Heaven! Alone in God's universe, we have defied God, denied our destiny. And before us lies Hell—not some crude, burning, fiery hell such as those with small imagination have sometimes envisaged—but a Hell consisting of God's rejection, a Hell where may be cast the broken refuse of creation, a Hell of everlasting failure, a Hell that we have well deserved.

(c) No man is ever going to begin himself to have a knowledge of what this Master of ours means to the world until he clearly sees that what he *deserves* is

Hell. Do I see it? Do I feel the woe of man's unredeemed condition? Do I teach my people the horror of it? Or am I, like the world around me, unwilling or unable to face the transcendent glory of God? Am I, too, a victim of that genial and utterly groundless humanism which assumes that man is mostly good, and always getting better? Do I think that I am for the most part quite all right, on the whole pleasing to the Almighty, and with the passing years improving sufficiently to satisfy anybody, even the Deity Himself?

Jesus does not think that. He knows me better, He knows God better. "And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to Heaven, thou shalt be thrust down to Hell." (S. Luke 10:15) "Whoso shall say to his brother, Thou fool, shall be in danger of Gehenna." (S. Matt. 5:22.) "It is better for thee to enter into life with one eye than, having two eyes, to be cast into hell." (S. Matt. 18:9) "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the condemnation of Gehenna?" (S. Matt. 23:33) "I forewarn you whom ye shall fear. Fear him which . . . hath power to cast into hell. Fear him." (S. Mark 12:5) "He that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost . . . is in danger of everlasting judgment." (S. Luke 3:29) "And these shall go into everlasting punishment." (S. Matt. 25:45) The One who said these sayings, who says them to you and me this morning, is no harsh, cruel tyrant. These are the words of Jesus. He warns that men and women, left to

themselves, choosing wrongly and exalting their own small wills against the Eternal (as all of us do, and as our fathers did before us), have cut themselves off from God and therefore do deserve His condemnation. In God's sight "shall no man living be justified." (Ps. 143:2)

Do I teach that clearly, and lovingly, to my people? If not, is it perhaps because I do not know it is true in respect to myself? That is entirely possible, for one of the most natural and most grave of all the effects of sin is its destruction in the sinner of the ability to realize the truth about himself. Have I sinned so often, so complacently, that the image in my mind of what the transcendent God is, and expects, has become so blurred that I do not see my own wretched state?

O Jesus, let me look on Thee. Whosoever hath seen Thee hath seen the Father. I gaze on Thee. I see in Thee the terrible majesty of the God who makes and judges all things, even me. I see in Thee, also, what man was meant to be; what I would be if I had obeyed the Eternal Law given by Thee for man's conduct. I see Thee, content to do the Father's will. I see Thee, choosing always rightly. I see Thee, tempted in all points as I am tempted, but without sin. I see Thy beauty, Thy loveliness, Thy peace above struggle, Thy purity, Thy strength, the glory of Thee. I look on Thy self-forgetfulness, Thy victory, Thy might, Thy whole humility, Thy meekness and Thy power. This, Thy

manhood, is what my manhood was meant to be, what it would be now had I not again and again rebelled and refused and been a fool. I am a sinner. Looking on Thee, I know it. I deserve not even to water Thy feet with my tears. I deserve not even to be Thy slave. If this, Thy life, is life as life was meant to be, I have no right to live—so marred, defaced, broken, defeated am I! O Jesus, I dare not look more. I know. I know at last. I am a lost creature. I have no right to Thee. I have no claim on mercy. I have failed. I am nothing. I am worse than nothing. I have conviction of sin, here, in Thy Presence. Surely I am damned.

The answer of Lord Jesus is not to deny my honestly-discovered unworthiness; nor is His bidding that I hope, of my own sin-depleted power, to rise from that damned state of being into which, by my wrong choosing, I have sunk. Not at all. He knows all these things even better than I know them.

His answer is, rather, "Yes, my son. All that you say is true. Yet are you not damned eternally, if so be that you put your trust in Me. You need not be damned. You can be rescued. I can rescue you. I have made possible your redemption, your justification before the Eternal. I have obeyed. And behold, I love you, despite your rejection of both Me and My Father. That love of Mine is so cleansing that, if you accept it, 'though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.'"

II

Let me now contemplate the glory of His redeeming love. By it, and by it alone, I am saved from everlasting destruction. "We shall be saved from wrath through Him," Paul assures us. As John says, "Thou hast redeemed us to God . . . and hast made us kings and priests." As Paul writes to Titus, "The Grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared . . . who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us. . . . These things speak." As Peter says, "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things . . . but with the precious blood of Christ . . . being born again, not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, by the word of God, who liveth and abideth forever." "Look up," says the Lord, "for your redemption draweth nigh." "He entered into the holy place," says the author of the letter to the Hebrews, "having obtained eternal redemption for us." "There is born in the city of David a Saviour." "This is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world." "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

There is in God that which redeems, restores, saves, as well as that which judges. We should never know that to be so, had not the Lord revealed it. What is this thing in God which redeems, restores, saves? It is His infinite compassion, extended to them that, having rejected Him and ruined themselves, at length know their weakness and their sin, and turn to Him.

His infinite compassion! By that God saves, by that He bids me help Him save, a world of failing men and women and children, a world bound else for woe beyond belief.

It is not enough that I should accept this Divine compassion in some sort of merely intellectual act of assent. A sufficient faith in the divine Redeemer is not a bald thing of the mind. A faith sufficient to release salvation must include the whole of me: mind, emotions, will. I have not really believed in redeeming love unless I begin at once myself to love redeemingly. "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." For my salvation, I must not only understand that God's redemption is by love. More, I must receive that love with gratitude of heart unspeakable. Most of all, I must will to *love with Him*. Love is of God, and it must also be of those who would live godly in this present world! I must be perceptive enough to understand that if God redemptively loves me, who have been His enemy and His crucifier by virtue of my wilfulness, and if indeed I am to share in redemptive love, then it follows that I must show that same redeeming love toward others.

All love is not redeeming love. Redeeming love is love given to those who do not deserve to be loved. "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do

good unto them that hate you, pray for them that despitefully use you, that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven. . . . For if ye love them that love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same?" "This is grace-releasing," says Peter, "if a man, because of knowledge within himself of God, endure grief suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it if, when you are buffeted for your faults, you bear up under it? But if, when you do well, and suffer for it, you bear up under it, that is acceptable with God. . . . Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow His steps; . . . who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; . . . who His own self bare our sins in His own Body on the tree." "Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." If I do indeed love my enemies, intensively love them, love them more passionately even than I love my friends, then am I a Christian; then am I in the way of redemption; then am I fit to be a priest. Do I teach that, proclaim it as of the heart and center of Christian morals? Do I believe it myself?

O Lover of sinners, make me to love sinners, that I, who am a sinner, may by saving love be saved!

But Christ's redeeming love, while it exists for all, is not of saving benefit to all, but only to those who truly and earnestly repent them of their wickedness and throw themselves upon the Divine mercy. Otherwise, a man walks on still in darkness. "This is the

condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." "If the wicked will not repent, God will whet His sword." "Repent ye." "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." "I come . . . to call sinners to repentance." There is always the Divine mercy; but we must turn to that mercy or it has no effect on us, or in us. There must be contrition, confession, satisfaction. Have I made my confessions regularly? frequently? contritely?

"I know that my Redeemer liveth." (Job. 19:25) *Do I know that? Do I know even my need of redemption? Do I understand the nature of redemption? Do I perceive within myself the fruits of redemption? Do I by Holy Penance put myself in the way of redemption? Do men see in me one who, in my poor way, redeems by love, love extended freely to mine enemies? Do I share my Lord's cross with joy? May God forbid that "by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." "Leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation." "Then shall I preach Thy word unto the people, and sinners shall be converted unto Thee."*

TEACHER

JESUS CHRIST's task and mine is, first of all, to redeem. His second great task, and mine, is to teach.

To put education in this second place may seem to some, perhaps, to be placing things out of logical and chronological order. There are those who would put education first, "for how," they ask, "can one appreciate the need of redemption until one has been at least somewhat educated in the nature of God and of sin." The answer is that one does not need very much of an education to feel an imperative need of justification. A sense of that need is, if you will, born in us. And also, until one is somehow in the way of redemption and justification, until one has been called from self and self-destructiveness by the appeal of God's love, any real education in things spiritual, or even in moral matters, is well-nigh impossible. Our Lord never made the mistake of putting education first. He called the Twelve, and they followed Him. Then, having called them, He began to teach them; but it was only after they had seen Him die for them, that He was able with any adequacy to instruct them in the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God. So also it was with

the woman at the well of Samaria. So also it was with that other woman who once was a sinner. So also it was with Zacchaeus. So it was always. He loved first, redeemed first; then He taught. So it is today, in His relationship with us. Which of us has come to understand His commands and precepts that did not *first* come to know Him as redeeming Lover?

Is this which is true about the teaching of Jesus adequately realized by me, either in my own approach to Him as a pupil, or in my attempts to educate those committed to my charge? Am I trying to impart the wisdom of the Lord to those that have not yet felt the cleansing impact of His redeeming Self?

"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Have I cried out, with John the Baptist, "Behold the Lamb of God!" Until I have somehow held Him up before the people, until they have seen Him, until they have given at least some love in answer to His love, they will not take the trouble to go to school to Him; not until they have at least glimpsed Him as He is, will they desire to learn His wisdom.

What kind of Jesus do our people see, painted by me? A pale and wistful ghost? A creature of mere sentiment and sweetness, lacking in virility? A harsh and cruel perfectionist, scorning perhaps, or it may be avoiding, the wicked? A respectable and sunny companion of the privileged and the polite and the well-

nurtured? A stained-glass figure, a pseudo-saintly abstraction far from earth, gliding miraculously over daisies which remain uncrushed beneath His unreal feet? An over-kindly soul who, seeing wickedness, turns His eyes the other way, and sighs, and thinks on Heaven, ignoring inconvenient wrong instead of overcoming it with good? All these caricatures, and more, are held in mental pictures of Jesus by many round about us. Have I painted Him more truly for my people? Have they seen Jesus as He is? If not, why not? Is it my fault that they have not known His compelling beauty, that beauty compounded of boundless strength and limitless compassion? Why have I not revealed Him better? Is it, perhaps, that I myself have not clearly seen Him, do not even now clearly see Him? And is that because I have not made my meditations,—regularly, consciously, before Him? Is it because I have not spent enough time each day in silent contemplation? Is it because I have said Mass irregularly or without humility? Is it because I have not participated in the mystery of adoration? Like those Greeks who came to Philip, there come to us those whose demand is, "Sir, we would see Jesus." That is the first need of the people. Have I Jesus to show them? When they look on me, do they know that I most certainly have seen Him? How can He teach them unless they have met Him, been loved by Him?

And, secondly, have I learned from Him that for

me to be an effective teacher, it is necessary that people should first come to know me and trust me—should watch me while, in my small way but to the best of my ability, I lay down my life for my pupils in an understanding and redeeming compassion? Do I realize that they must see all this in me before they will listen to what I have to say?

In Japan there are more Russian Orthodox Christians than there are all other sorts put together; and yet the Russian Orthodox Mission has cost the home Church next to nothing. How does it happen that this Church, penniless, has won men and women to Christ more than the others to which were given great financial aid? There was one single, simple man, a Russian priest, who went to Japan and lived in the slums, working for his bread in hard, manual labor and quietly loving his fellow-workmen. He shared their sorrows, understood their travail, gave his all to them. For a time he did not preach at all. He told only such as asked him that his God was a carpenter, who worked and loved, and that His name was Jesus. When men had watched this priest for a long time, and learned to love him, at last they asked that he would teach his friends about this God of his. He did it; and the great Japanese Orthodox Church is the result. There was also Francis of Assisi, who set out to prop up again that Church which, not only in Pope Innocent's dream but in reality, was fast falling down. He did it. How? First he loved enough to share the

lot of those poor people who were cursing the Church and God. When they perceived that in very truth the Poverello loved them, then he taught them, and they began to understand.

“Take my yoke upon you and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.” I must ponder those words. I cannot teach my people *anything* unless my love has won the response of their love. If my teaching of religion and morals seems to get nowhere; if my people ignore what I say, intent on their own way rather than on God’s way; if they complain about my sermons; if the children will not come to me in Catechism and Sunday School; if my confessional is empty week after week:—well, if these things be so, to my heartbreak, then, whatever else may be wrong with me, at any rate this is almost certain to be wrong: I have not really loved my people.

O Jesus, have mercy on me and forgive. Men and women have heeded You through all the ages. Some have rejected You, because they understood only too well the terrifying impact of Your love; and some You have made into the sons and daughters of God, giving them a new birth which is not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. These have adored and obeyed You—disciples, pupils—because You cared for them with a tireless and understanding care. But me they do not heed. O Jesus, You know *why*; and so do I.

But when I have loved, and continue to love, *how* shall I teach? Loving all the while, how does *He* teach? Perhaps the chief pedagogical lessons that we can learn of Him are these: (1) He offers Himself as teacher everywhere, but never under any circumstances does He intrude Himself; (2) He never does a pupil's thinking for him. Let us briefly consider these in turn.

(1) (a) He offers Himself everywhere. He is not content always to sit down in some synagogue and wait for the people to come to hear His instructions. "Seeing a multitude of people, Jesus went up the hill. There He seated Himself and proceeded to teach them." "He departed in order to teach and proclaim His message in the neighboring towns." "He began to teach by the seaside." "He went round about the villages, teaching." "Go ye out into the highways and the hedges and compel them to come in." "Go ye into all the world and proclaim the good-news to every creature." Philip, having learned Jesus' methods, taught and convinced the Ethiopian eunuch as they rode along in a chariot. Whenever Paul went to a new town, he taught first in the synagogue. If they rejected his teaching (and they usually did), he went out to teach the heathen. If they also were unheeding, he went on to another city. So the Lord had advised. "Whosoever refuses to receive you or even listen to your message, as you leave, shake off the dust from your feet." "If they will not receive you, go out into the broad street." Francis of Assisi and the Brothers

Minor went into the highways and alleys and hedges, teaching whoever would listen. Dominic and the Friars Preachers went into the universities and did the same. Ignatius Loyola and the Jesuits—there was no place to which they did not go. Wesley mounted a horse and preached on circuit, wherever a crowd would gather.

We Anglican priests, are we teachers who go about offering ourselves to anyone that will hear; or do we think that we must do all our teaching while nicely dressed in a well-fitted cassock and a clean surplice, somewhere within a properly-appointed building? Is it our way of evangelism to say to the heathen, "Do come in to our nice building. It is all rather dull, I am afraid; and I can not be sure that the congregation, such as it is, will make you very welcome; but if you take all the bother involved, I shall teach you, most politely, and with one ear keyed to hear any murmur of disapproval that may arise from the vestry or the Ladies' Aid?" Let me *teach, rather, wherever I can and as the Spirit moves me*. If, despite my true love for them, the people that I have reject me, let me leave them and go out to convert the unbelievers. Wherever men and women congregate, there be I found, offering my friendship, offering my understanding, offering my teaching, offering our God. *Jesus, as teacher, offers Himself everywhere*. So must I.

(b) But Jesus never intrudes Himself. No forcing of issues with Him. No "soul-surgery," unless the

patient wishes the operation performed. Our Lord is a gentleman; He never injects Himself where He is not wanted. See how quietly He departs from Nazareth when they will have none of Him. See how, for awhile, He has nothing to do even with His Holy Mother, when she does not understand and seeks to coerce Him. He does not quarrel with her. He does not seek to force His opinions on her. He respects her right not to co-operate. In the end He wins her back, at the Cross. He could wait. The Sadducees clamoured with Him in discussion that showed resentment. "He left them and went away." The Gadarenes began to ask Him to get out of their country. He departed at once to Decapolis. The rich young man made the great refusal. He let him go. So it was always. So it is today.

Is it so with me? Or do I intrude myself on people that do not want me, seeking by argument or artifice to hold those whose hearts I have lost or who have taken choice against my cause and will no longer listen? Do I think that I shall be heard for my much speaking, my too great reiteration?

Jesus, as Teacher, offers Himself everywhere; but He never intrudes where He is not wanted. When He is no longer wanted, He goes teaching somewhere else. "Ah, yes," one says, "but You, Lord Jesus, are free so to behave. You are not tied to a parish. You do not have to consider whence Your wife and children are to gain their bread, their clothing; Your boys

and girls their education and careers. You do not quite understand how I am situated." "Yes," replies Jesus, "I understand all that, My son. *Do you?*"

(2) *And He never does another's thinking for him*: never consents to do so even when asked. Canon Raven, has, in a book called "Christ and Modern Education," said a true word about our Lord's teaching methods, especially in respect to the refusal to dominate His disciples.

"He provokes curiosity, elicits discoveries, opens up enquiries; but He lets His hearers form their own conclusions. 'He that hath ears to hear, let him hear'—was there ever such trust in the faculties of mankind, such respect for their personalities, such patience in allowing misunderstanding? He will explain, if they ask; He will follow up what they have gained; He will balance one lesson with another. But it is their growth, not His power to impress Himself upon them, that matters; better no discipleship than a forced compliance with an inward rebellion. Love will win in the long run; but first it must suffer many things, even contempt and rejection; it will win by its own inherent worth of beauty and truth, and He will trust it to death and beyond. Hence His freedom from the desire for quick returns, for a high statistical percentage of successes, for the easy attainment of a recognized standard." There is no need for coercion or prizes if the teacher loves enough and is patient.

Why do I not myself learn more easily what Jesus

has to teach? Why does it seem, sometimes, that I learn from Him so little, or even that I have learned all that He has to impart? It may be that I expect the wrong sort of instruction from Him, that what I desire is cut-and-dried, Divinely-made solutions for the problems that trouble me. He will not give me "direction" of that sort. He says that the Holy Spirit, who comes from the Father through Him, will "guide into all truth"—that is to say, will make it possible for me better and better to see my problems as they are related to His purpose; will help me to work out those problems in the light of what the Son reveals. The Spirit will bring to my memory all that He has said to me. But the pupil must do his own thinking.

I must make my own decisions. The Divine Teacher, by His words and by the impartation of Himself in sacraments and prayer, reveals the great central truths about God and human destiny; but it is I who must apprehend those truths and make application of them in terms of my own life. The Teacher teaches; but the pupil must do his own learning, or else there can be no growth in knowing. I must, then, not only pray, but also study and think. I must labor hard to understand the world's puzzling difficulties, and man's dilemmas. When I have unravelled them as best I can, I must bring them, by prayer, at meditation time and at Holy Mass, to the touchstone of His Presence. Let me stop asking Jesus to do my thinking for me; but rather let me expect Him to give help, inspiration,

steadiness, and courage to me that I may do my own thinking. He is a Teacher, not a magician. Like all teachers, He relies on His pupil using mind and will; nor is He prepared to replace my intellectual labor with His own.

And what of my own attempts to teach in His Name? Do I give to my people a pabulum of truth, about God and man and morals, all neatly predigested and put up in capsules for hasty assimilation? Do I really think that helps anybody? Jesus never used that method. He knew, even if I forget, that in teaching I must remember not merely the truth to be taught but where the listener is who is to be taught, what he actually thinks about it all at the beginning of the instruction. Jesus knew that in teaching one can succeed only in so far as one gains the glad assent of the pupil at each stage of the argument. Because He knew that, Jesus got results. Do I? Do I bother much to know what my people are thinking? Do I make them feel that I understand why they think that way (when finally I come to know what it is they do think), and that I entirely respect their right to think that way until I can convince them that it is a wrong or inadequate way to think? Do I even ask what my people wish and need to know? Do my sermons come out of knowledge of what is in their minds? Am I a good listener? Or do I, on the contrary, seem to my people opinionated, cocksure, magisterial, dictatorial, what is popularly and wrongly called "dogmat-

ic"? No one ever made complaint of that in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Teach me,
Master, teach me how to teach.
That I may teach aright,
Help me to listen,
And to understand,
And to be patient,
Like Yourself,
Rabboni.

SANCTIFIER

LET ME think of myself as in the Upper Room in Jerusalem on the night in which He was betrayed. Indeed, I am at that first Mass, for with me is that same Bread which He then made to be His Body; here is that Body in which He eternally offers sacrifice for all the world. Time and space to God are nothing. It is only to human beings, limited in creation as we are, that time and space have meaning. Whenever and wherever we are in His sacramental Presence, we are at the Mass which was, and is, and is to be. Here am I, then, side by side with Peter and James and John and the rest of the Twelve. He has called them and me to be His priests, His prophets, His pastors, His co-workers. Having loved us, He loves us to the end, to the fullness of loving. He is praying for us. His whole being goes out in intercession for us. He knows how difficult is our task. He has felt, and feels, the burden as well as the glory of that task. It is His before ever it came to be ours. He knows our need. What is it that He is asking for us? Not that we may be zealous, or fluent of speech, or likeable, or popular, or well-cared for, or happy, or even good. All these

things, He does desire for us. They all may be excellent things for us; but they are good only if we are something that is more important than any of them, than all of them. He is praying that we may be holy.

Hear Him: "Sanctify them, I pray Thee, Father, through Thy truth. Thy word is Truth. As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified."

Sanctity, or holiness, means being set apart as an instrument for God to use. It involves two elements: dedication by men to the service of God, and acceptance and consecration by Him. Anything, and more particularly, any life, which has been so offered and so accepted, takes on that quality to which Dr. Otto has given the name "numinous." Through that thing, or that life, shines God! Men look on it and feel a certain awe, awe not of the thing itself nor of the person himself, but of the God who shines through. "No man hath seen God at any time; the Only-begotten Son hath declared Him." "He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father." Men looked upon the manhood of the Master. It was all that their physical eyes could see; but they also saw God. We look upon His *sacramental* manhood. It is all that our eyes can see; but we also see God, numinous; and we adore Deity, the whole of Godhead shining through. This it is which has made the Lord Jesus the source of power for salvation, and the Way, the Truth, the Life.

This holiness of His is something quite different from His goodness. Goodness would not in itself have been enough to win mankind to God. Indeed its very possession, if there had been nothing more, might have repelled us from God, revealing a gulf, too deep to be bridged, between Him and us. There is in Him something vastly more than goodness. He is "numinous." Men, looking on Him, see past the visible to the invisible. When He speaks, behind the audible, men hear that which may not be spoken. When they touch Him, power goes out from Him. He is holy and Holiest. Through His perfectly-offered humanity, *God shines*.

It is God for whom men and women are hungry. Every man is lonely and lost; and for the most part, at least subconsciously, every man knows it. In his more youthful years, every man has a pathetic trust in various of his fellow-men, especially in teachers and older friends: pathetic, because only too soon he finds, by way of disillusioning experience, that neither in respect to wisdom nor in respect to integrity is any other human being sufficient to supply the need his spirit feels. After awhile, every man comes to despair of any adequate satisfaction for his loneliness and bewilderment. He makes the "necessary adjustments," perhaps, and goes his way, alone—sometimes bitterly, sometimes with a regretful but charitable acknowledgment that there is no hope of anyone's finding in his fellows an adequate escape; but always there re-

mains, down deep in every man, a realization that somewhere in the cosmos, if only He could be found, is One who has ultimate understanding, to whom one may surrender and be free. That One, though, is perceived to be no man at all, but only God Himself.

Ben. So strong is the urgent longing for God in every soul, that whenever a man or woman appears through whom God shines, one who is numinous, men will follow that one whithersoever he or she may lead—not because that one is necessarily strong or wise or clever (he or she may be none of those things), not even because of goodness (though if one be truly numinous, he or she cannot be greatly bad), but because that one is *a translucent envelope for Deity*. From that one pour forth solace, understanding, challenge, courage, hope. And all these blessings come not *from* that one, but *through* that one, from *God*.

A holy man, then, is one set apart by God, one through whom God shines, through whom God ministers to hungry, needing, lonely human souls. Such a one pre-eminently and perfectly was, and is, our Master Jesus Christ. Even the evil spirit of confusion recognized it, and cried out, "I know Thee, who Thou art: —the Holy One of God!"

Opinion as called I am called to be a holy man, This is His prayer for me: "Make him holy." Men and women do not heed, overmuch, my small wisdom. They are not helped, overmuch, by my imperfect goodness. They will not follow me overfar, if all there is to follow is only

insufficient me. They have seen so many parsons! The hungry sheep look up and are not fed, if all they have to feed upon is what I do and say and am. "Make him holy." So He prays. "Make him such that Deity may use him, think in and through and from beyond his sluggish mind, speak in and through and from beyond his feeble words, move in and through and from beyond his stumbling actions."

~~Can He use me so? He could be numinous; but can I? I am not God Incarnate.~~

~~No, I am not.~~ The God that must shine in me is not a God inherent in my being; the God that must shine in me (or I am nothing) is a God imparted to me, infused into me. It is not enough that God should be with me, or beside me. He must dwell in me until it is literally true that, as Paul told the Athenians, in Him I "live and move and have my being." ~~"Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you," Jesus has promised. That power is not of me. That power is God the Holy Ghost in me, using me for His own purpose. "Who is sufficient for these things?" asks Paul. The answer is "No one." "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think [or do] anything as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God."~~

God can so use men. He can so use me. When He does, I may begin really to do things—no, He will begin to do things in and by me. ~~What was it in John Baptist that made even Herod fear and respect him? "John was a just man and an holy," says the Scrip-~~

ture, "and when Herod heard him, he did many things, and heard John gladly." Yes, though Herod killed the prophet, yet he heard the prophet. Why? Because when Herod looked upon the prophet, Herod saw God shining through. And why do we honor some Christians above all others, them that we call the saints? "Saint" comes from "sanctus." It means "holy." "Saint" has become a word perhaps too conventionalized for effective use today. Why not, in our devotions and meditations, stop using it? Let us use "holy" instead. "*Holy Peter, Holy Paul, Holy Francis, Holy Catherine of Siena, Holy Stephen, Holy Thomas à Becket, Holy Mary Magdalene, pray for us.*" Or let us use "numinous." "*Numinous Andrew, God-possessed Ambrose and Augustine, God-revealing John, God-bearing Mary of Nazareth, pray for us.*" And we, we too, are "called to be saints," "called to be *holy*," "called to be *numinous*," that we may "know what is the hope of His invitation, and what the wealth of the glory of his inheritance in the saints," in the holy ones, in the *numinous ones*, through whom He shines to enlighten the world.

"Make him holy," He prays for me. "Amen."

What need I do, Jesus, that I may become holy? You could sanctify *Yourself*, Lord. "For their sakes," You said, "I sanctify *Myself*, that they may be sanctified." But I am not God and man in one person, as You are. I am only man. I *cannot* sanctify myself. I cannot take possession of myself and thereby be made

God-revealing, numinous. You must do it for me. But if ever You are to do it, what must I be, what must I do, to make that sanctification possible?

In the first place, I must be humble. I must know that I am not effective, not competent, not sufficient. I must know, and gladly admit, my nothingness. That is very hard to do; but I must do it, or God cannot use me. When I have done all which with my own power I can do, I am to say (and mean it), "I am an unprofitable servant." Once, it may be, I was impressed with my own power. Of myself, I was going to convert and set right the whole world, to preach soul-winning sermons, wisely to tend the flock. Surely I have by now learned better than that. There is no virtue in me that is worth valuing, worth men's esteem or reverence. I cannot of myself heal the sick or cast out demons, or save anybody's soul, or reform Society, or turn a cruel world into a Paradise. Let me cease to be a fool. Let me be humble.

In the second place, I must have faith. I must have an implicit confidence that, although I can do none of these things, God can do any and all of them, and will if I am content to be His instrument. Sermons that are good sermons can come from my lips, if, having worked as hard as I can in preparation, I then let Him tell me what to say. Souls may be won to God if, when I have done all that I can in preparation, I let Him guide me. I can be a good pastor of the people if, plus all my diligence, there is a complete

confidence that He, and not I, is the sufficient Lover of their souls. If men can see and forget me, they will, it may be, see Him and *not* forget *Him*.

Humility and faith, then, I must have; yes, and self-surrender. Have I these things, Lord Jesus? Have I desired them? Have I labored for them? Have I prayed for them?

None of them may be had by virtue only of a wistful longing for them; nor alone by virtue of asking for them even in those more than occasional moments when my own incompetence is by some sudden failure, or by some imposed shame, driven home to me. Daily they must be sought by me: humility and faith and self-surrender. I must be disciplined for their attainment. The nature of that discipline has come down to us who now are priests, from them who, in the days before us have sought for sanctity. Humility and faith and self-surrender I may gain *by daily Mass and daily Offices and daily meditation*. These are the normal disciplines for attainment of the virtues necessary to holiness (and to effective priesthood). If I think that I am exempt from necessity for these disciplines, that I can come at holiness in some less difficult and more exceptional manner, is that very thought not evidence of a self-conceit that is the opposite of humility, and of a pride that is preventive of self-surrender?

Do I say my Mass daily? Or even as nearly daily as I can, if daily be physically impossible? Regularly? Systematically? Devoutly? Humbly? Self-effacingly?

*do I know that as a priest
I must become a truly man
— or fail.*

Do I say my Offices daily? (That is *always* possible.) In the Offices, do I seek to sink all consciousness of me in the Psalmody of the holy ones, wholly forgetting self? Is the Creed my true profession of a living trust in God, a perfect and serene confidence in Him?

Do I make a meditation daily? And is the prayer that flows from that meditation full of adoration and thanksgiving? And from it does there come contrition, and a complete entrustment of myself to His power?

Do I, in Mass and Offices and meditation, make much of God and nothing of myself?

~~If in these ancient and time-tested ways~~ I am a seeker, then I shall find those necessary priestly virtues: humility and faith and self-surrender. And when I find them, then, and not till then, God can use me. Then, and not till then, He will begin to shine in me. I shall not be proud of that shining. God forbid! I shall not even know that the radiance exists or may be seen of men for, if I knew it, the radiance would disappear. No holy man has knowledge of his holiness. And so to the end of days I shall be as one who is nothing, is worth nothing. But God, He will be seen of men because I have been His. And so I, having nothing, may make many rich.

Lord Jesus, grant the prayer of one who here before Thee appeals to Thee in weakness. Make me holy, lest Thy Kingdom be delayed: make me holy, for without Thee I am nothing. Shine through my nothingness. Thy will be done in me.

EXAMPLE¹

ANOTHER thing which Jesus said to the Twelve, the original Christian priests at the first Mass, and which He says to us who with the Twelve are in the Presence, is this: "I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done." This means, surely, that a priest is supposed to set a good example, since we are to do *all things* that He has done. Indeed the Lord is specific in His teaching that priests are to be examples to other people, for He tells us: "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light to all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven." (S. Matt. 5:14-16)

That is a command that is almost overwhelming. It is perhaps not too difficult to tell the world, in sermons and instructions, that Jesus is divine enough to save; but the command is that I shall be such a one

¹ For the outline of this meditation I am largely indebted to Archbishop Alban Goodier, S.J., in *The Life that is Light*, (vol. 1, pp. 143-144). The development is my own.—B. I. B.

that men may look on me and see what is this Jesus whom I preach. I am not able to do this thing. I am not able so to live my days that every time another meets me, he looks on an *alter Christus*. How can I be better than other men and yet avoid a spiritual conceit such as will drive men away from me, and from my God? O yes, I know that the example He gave, and bade me give, is one of self-forgetful service. I remember that it was that time He washed His pupils' feet when He told them: "I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done." But am I always to be, as it were "in character"? Am I always to be publicly and advertisedly a priest? "Yes, my son, you are always to be in character, always a priest." But, Lord am I never to play? "Yes, my son, you are to play, but only at such pastimes as are consistent with your being looked to as a priest and as an example. You are to play, but only as a Christian ought to play; and work, but only as a Christian ought to work; and talk, but only as a Christian ought to talk; and write, but only as a Christian ought to write; and be only what a Christian ought to be, and should be glad to be. You cannot escape your priesthood, my son. You are the light of the world, and that light may not be placed under a bushel, no, not even for a holiday time, nor for a day, nor for an hour. You are set for an example to the people."

Yes, Lord, it is even so. My desire to escape from the responsibility is really evidence of my imperfect

belief that Your way is the right way and the happiest way. I keep desiring to be possessed by You and yet also to follow the world that rejects You. I wish to be a priest and yet to have people forget, at least sometimes, that I am a priest. I deceive myself about these, my desires. I say that I can win people to You more easily if I doff my uniform; if I am one of the boys on their terms. That is only a rationalization of my foolish longings, yet unpurged, and evidence of a divided mind. Well do I know, in my heart of hearts, that the boys despise me when they see me one of themselves at such times and in terms of what are their pursuits when they behave not as the sons of God but as something less, far less, They despise me for it; and You must hate me for it, Jesus.

“No, my son, I do not hate you, never can; but nevertheless My cause is indeed unaccomplished, My purpose indeed unfulfilled, when you forget Me and My work for you.”

I must never be a prig; but I must always be a priest, and an example. He expects it of me. Holy Church expects it of me, too. Holy Church assumes that I have been called by true vocation. It thinks, at least, that I have been better educated and trained to goodness than the rank and file of men. My friends and parishioners also expect it of me. They trust me. They look up to me. They need a living guidance, on the honesty of which they can count, poor souls, baffled and buffeted by life till they hardly know which

step next to take. Am I to "let them down"? Even my enemies—and my Lord's enemies—fear my good example. It is my chief weapon for confounding them. As Peter says, "So is the will of God, that with well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men; as free, but not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God." If I fall, if I *appear* to fall, these enemies of mine, as says the Psalmist, will rejoice at it. At words they may scoff; but a good example defeats them in the end. They may destroy the evil-doing or compromising priest; at the worst, all they can do to the good priest is to persecute him and kill him. That is no tragedy. They did that to this Lord of mine. In a transparent honesty of priesthood is my only real strength. My good example is, then, demanded by the Lord Himself, by the Church, by my friends, by my enemies. Shall I not then make the same demand of myself?

In what, as a priest I must ask myself, does my example consist? It has two parts: one negative and one positive.

The *negative* example consists in not lowering by my conduct the standard of the Lord. It means, among other things, that I shall not say what it is unworthy for the Lord's priest to say; that I shall guard my tongue against evil-speaking, lying and slandering, against profanity, indecency, foolish talking, boasting, complaining, tale-bearing. It means that I shall be more careful about such talk, even, than is required to

avoid mortal sin. And it means that I am not to do anything unworthy of the Lord's priest. I must not be impure, or even indiscreet, in my conversation with women; and I must be more than normally modest and decent in my companionship with others of my own sex. If I am impure, it is not merely faith in me that is destroyed, but faith in God. Woe be to me if in respect to purity I help, not only to drag another into sin but, because I am a priest that did it, also to destroy the belief of that sinner in the power of God to rescue him or her from wickedness. I must, also, be plainly "not greedy of filthy lucre," as Paul warned Timothy, and no smooth intriguer for place or profit. Nor dare I be harsh, cruel, ill-tempered, unjust, irritable. All such conduct is plainly unpriestly, unChristlike, scandalous. To refrain from such doings is what is meant by my being negatively a good example.

And the *positive* example? That consists in living a life consistent with my preaching: in being, or trying my best to be, what I tell others that God expects a Christian to be; in doing, or trying everlastingly to do, what I tell them that God expects a Christian to do. It is required that, since I preach sacrifice of comfort and the means thereunto for the sake of the Lord's work, I shall myself, plainly and obviously, sacrifice my own comfort and the means thereunto; that, since I preach that with God there is no respect of persons, I shall be as kind to the poor and the nobodies as to

the rich and the somebodies; that, since I preach that it is more fun to live God's way than the world's way, I shall ever be found a joyful man, not looking wistfully, out of the corner of my eye, upon the worldling's prosperity; that, since I preach that the right, as one is given to see the right, must be followed at any cost, I shall not compromise, no, not for any cause soever, what I am convinced is the Lord's truth; that, since I say that a Christian is the servant of men for Jesus' sake, I must do my best myself to be just that.

To be such an example, negatively and positively, is most tremendously hard. As Portia told Nerissa in the play, "It were easier to tell twenty what were good to be done than to be one of the twenty to follow mine own instruction." Better deeds without words than words without deeds! Hear the Master speaking: "A certain man had two sons. He came to the first and said, Son, go to work today in my vineyard. And he answered and said, I will not; but afterward he changed his mind and went. He came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said, Sir, I go; and went not. Whether of them twain did the will of his father?"

The first, Lord.

"Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the Kingdom of God before some of you."

Of course it is hard, never to deny by one's life what one is persuaded in one's mind is the truth about

life (though not enough persuaded in one's heart and will), and so make shipwreck of one's priesthood. Not that I am expected to be suddenly complete in my achievement; but it must be made plain to every one, including God, that though I be not wholly saved, yet am I in the way of salvation. Of course it is hard; but it has to be done. Because it is hard, I need and must seek all the encouragement that is possible; and the sources of encouragement are very great indeed.

Let me remember the splendid tradition of priesthood that has been handed down to me. That there have been many faithless and unworthy priests is, alas, only too true; but when one considers the millions, literally millions, of men who have shared with the Christ His work of priesthood, one cannot but be almost overwhelmed with awe and wonder at the cumulative force of their nobility and faithfulness. "Yea, I have a goodly heritage," more truly than the Psalmist ever dreamed. Let me think of Paul, him who said, with an entirely justified self-estimate combined with true humility about the source of what goodness he possessed: "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." Let me remember Peter, he who could say, and had earned the right to say, "He that will love life and see good days, . . . let him eschew evil and do good. Sanctify the Lord God in your heart, . . . having a good conscience that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evil-doers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ." Let

me recall John, he who said "Beloved, now are we the sons of God . . . and every man that hath this hope purifieth himself, even as He is pure." Let me consider all those outstandingly noble priests, "of whom the world was not worthy," to whom has been given canonization. Let me not forget those myriad other good and honest priests of whom there is no memorial. Let me keep in mind the good priests I myself have known in younger days, whose examples none who knew them can forget: not what they said, so much, nor even what they did, but what they were. All these are praying for me, hoping much of me. What an encouragement! They were all sinners, true enough; and yet, because they were redeemed sinners, how inspiring was, and is, their achieved pattern. "Wherefore, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus . . . Lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed."

Let me also remember that the great body of the faithful, living today, while they make great demands, and proper demands, upon me for a life of good guidance in the Christian way, also are ready to support me by intercession and encouragement if I do

but lead them on. Their very expectation is a source of strength; and they are ready with an active help. If they have become discouraged and petty and petulant with their pastors, it is mostly because other priests, and I, have disappointed them. Let a priest but be a good priest—kind, firm, sure, diligent, honest, loving—; and with an almost pathetic quickness the people rally round him. Even the sinners love such a priest, just as they loved the Lord Himself. And when the day of such a priest is done, men and women and little children unite to call him blessed, and remember him with thanksgiving.

And more than for all other aid to goodness, let me be grateful for the grace and love and strength of Jesus Christ Himself. "Behold I send you forth," He says, "as sheep in the midst of wolves. Be ye therefore wise as servants and harmless as the pigeons." "The very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not." "Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world." "Ye shall not be ashamed or confounded, world without end." "All things are possible to him that believeth." "To them that believed gave He authority to become the sons of God." "Ask and ye shall receive." "If ye abide in Me, and I in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape,

that ye may be able to bear it." "The Lord of hosts is with us. The God of Jacob is our refuge." "My grace is sufficient for thee."

These sources of encouragement I have, therefore, in an effort to become a right ~~example to the flock~~ ^{truly man}, and so to draw many to the Lord: the help and succour and belief in me of the saintly priests who have borne the burden of this task before my day; the need, and appeal, and longing to support me, latent in the sheep whom up to now I have so badly led; the grace and power of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. I am not left alone. To become a good man, fit for priesthood, and effective for God, ~~with decent character and an honorable life in the sight of all men~~, I am not, happily, dependant on my own strength.

Such thoughts as these surely lead me to a better understanding of what ought to be my confessions. Too often I have been content, like the Pharisee, because I am not like other men, "extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast, I give tithes, more than is the custom of the crowd." I have been satisfied if I were as good as the decent but secularist folk about me. I have been desirous of no more than the normal goodness of my people. What have I sought to do, or to be, more than others? My confessions have been phrased accordingly. But I am a priest. Therefore must I be a penitent in a different degree than that. When the Lord hears me making my confession, how He must be sorrowful! How He must

long to challenge me, as He challenged them of old time! If I listen, I can hear Him, saying to me as to them, "Be ye perfect, even as your Father in Heaven is perfect." And at that word, all pride of moral achievement melts away from me, like wax before the flame of Him. And so it is that I may become, if only I do truly hear, an example to my brethren in the noblest virtue of them all, the virtue of a true and quite unfeigned humility.

X

DEATH¹

“WHY stand we in jeopardy every hour? I die daily.”
So says Paul.

Let me meditate upon the certainty and imminence of physical death, and try to see what light that death may throw upon my priesthood.

It may seem queer that one should think on death now, in this latter end of a book about priestly living. What a cheerless subject, what a depressing thought with which to close one's meditations! If I think that, I thereby confess that I am not so brave or so wise as was the Lord Jesus Christ. He never dodged a fact, least of all the certain fact of death. He sought meaning in death, not avoidance of it; and He sought meaning for life in the light of death. Shall I not do that, too?

How can I avoid thinking about death, even if I would? My priestly duty is constantly reminding me of it. Every day, when I offer the Holy Mass I “do show forth the Lord's death till He come.” Every time I baptize, I pray for the neophyte that he “may

¹ Part of this meditation will be found also in the author's *In the City of Confusion*, chapter 1. (Harper and Brothers.)

be buried with Christ in His death." (Bap. office p. 281, Col. 2:12) Whenever I say an *Ave*, I ask our Lady's prayers for all of us "in the hour of our death." Again and again, I stand by a dying man or woman or child, and commit to God. Again and again, I bury the body of humiliation. We priests cannot avoid death and the thought of it, no matter how much the world around us chooses to do so.

And let me not think merely of death in the abstract. Let me not think, either, only of the death of other people. Let me remember my own death. In ever so short a time my physical body will be but dust, and all that the body now owns and boasts—its appetites, achievements, possessions—will be as though they never had been. "Desire shall fail, because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets. Then shall the dust return to dust as it was. Vanity of vanities! All is vanity." Shall I live for wealth? It will very soon have me no more for its possessor. Shall I accumulate property? No one can tell who will disperse it. Shall I live for appetite—for food or speed or sex? In a few short days, there will be no longer any sensitivity to carnal joys like these. Am I to live in terms of mastery over others? They whom I rule will soon throw the rubbish that awed them to the elements from which it came—ashes to ashes.

In the terms of those rewards for which most people live and labour, there is no end to my career except to be cast into the earth or burned to ignominious

powder by those who shall survive me. In terms of those rewards which most men are content to seek, I have no life that can endure. At length, and soon, all bodily striving, all physical possession, come alike to destruction. Do I call myself strong? I shall soon be weak. Or rich? I shall soon be poor. Well-clothed? I shall soon be naked. Do I hear ringing in my ears applause of men? There will soon be silence. Do people flatter me? Unnoticing, they soon will pass me by. "Remember, O man, that dust thou art, and to dust shalt thou return!"

Does it make me sad to remember that nothing long matters except God and my soul: my obedience to Him and His love toward me? Then there is something dangerously wrong about my religion. The thought of death is a touchstone to determine whether or not I am a converted man, and fit to preach to others. If I am afraid to die, if the grave seems the tragic end of things, then I am not in eternal life. Then am I not one whose citizenship is in Heaven. "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most to be pitied. Your faith is vain. You are yet in your sins."

Sometimes priests seek refuge from mention of death in an assurance to themselves that they must not preach and practice an "otherworldly" religion, but confine both preaching and practice to a this-worldly field. That must seem madness to Lord Jesus. As He sees things, I am *to live here in terms of*

hereafter. Only so can men and women solve the problems of the here. Only the other-worldly, ever mindful of death, have clarity of vision enough, moral courage enough, to deny the lure of wealth and the desire for power; and it is those two evil things which chiefly banish peace and justice from the earth. "Then the man said: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there will I bestow my fruits and my goods; and I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him: 'Thou fool, this night thy soul is required of thee; then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?'" To our Lord, "the other world" is the world that has reality. What we call "this world" is in truth "another and a temporary world." As says Paul: "The scheme of this world passeth away." And so also says James: "For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth." And so says John: "The world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." And what says the Lord? "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away." And the chief of our Anglo-Catholic poets, Christina Rossetti, has written one of her greatest lyrics, in comment on these texts, to say the same:

"Passing away, saith the World, passing away:
Chances, beauty and youth sapped day by day:

Thy life never continueth in one stay.
Is the eye waxen dim, is the dark hair changing to grey
That hath won neither laurel nor bay?
I shall clothe myself in Spring and bud in May:
Thou, root-stricken, shalt not rebuild thy decay
On my bosom for aye.
Then I answered: Yea.

“Passing away, saith my Soul, passing away:
With its burden of fear and hope, of labour and play,
Hearken what the past doth witness and say:
Rust in thy gold, a moth is in thine array,
A canker is in thy bud, thy leaf must decay.
At midnight, at cockcrow, at morning, one certain day
Lo the Bridegroom shall come and shall not delay;
Watch thou and pray.
Then I answered: Yea.

“Passing away, saith my God, passing away:
Winter passeth after the long delay:
New grapes on the vine, new figs on the tender spray,
Turtle calleth turtle in Heaven’s May.
Though I tarry, wait for Me, trust Me, watch and
pray:
Arise, come away, night is past and lo it is day,
My love, My sister, My spouse, thou shalt hear Me say.
Then I answered: Yea.”

Does not the thought of death, which comes to me
here in the Presence of Him who died and rose again
and “ever liveth to make intercession for us,” serve,

*Let me remember death and
prayer which death cannot
in light of which death matters
not.*

better than any other consideration could possibly serve, to bring to a resolution all the things that here I have come to know about my priesthood, as seen in the light of His priesthood?

If I remember death, I shall escape in my priesthood the lure of money, the fret for comfort, the desire for security in terms of earth.

If I remember death, I shall not in my priesthood fear lest men may hate me, despise me, forsake me, either in youth or age; nor shall I tremble if the worldly threaten me, demanding that I water down My Master's word to suit their lukewarm desire.

If I remember death, it will not vex me that, in my short day, I have not saved the world, or even made upon its glittering surface of pride one single apparent scratch. My work is part of an infinite plan that will not fail. He conquers, in His own way. All that He asks is that I do what His loving commandment tells me to do.

If I remember death, I shall not in my priesthood have respect of persons. I shall not neglect the poor, the ill-esteemed, the lowly, nor shall I curry favour with the great. "He hath put down the mighty from their seat and hath exalted the humble and meek."

If I remember death, I shall not in my priesthood be alarmed if I shall see that many of those who somehow have gained the Church's chief preferments, are proud or compromising or time-serving or cowardly or cruel, or all these put together. Nay, I shall pray for

them, rather, knowing well that in death "every one that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

If I remember death, I shall not in my priesthood let the raising of money, or the erecting of fabric, or the turning of wheels, prevent a life with God. Money-raising? As Peter told Elymas the sorcerer, "no gift of God can be purchased with money." Buildings? As Stephen warned the high-priest and his council, "the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands." And Jesus speaks of our church structures, of our cathedrals, as well as of the ancient Temple when He says: "As for these things which ye behold, the days will come when there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." And the turning of wheels? "Martha, Martha, thou art full of care and troubled about many things. Only one thing is needful." Only one thing matters in the light of death. Money I shall raise, but only from people who freely wish to give it, and only for God's glory. Buildings I shall erect and beautify, but never as ends in themselves. Activity I shall promote, but only where it leads the people with me to God's altar. And if such priesthood offend and drive away those who seek not God but their own amusement and advertisement, and if in consequence I be given no preferment, nor even food and clothing, nor a roof over my head—what does that matter, if I do indeed see life in focus, because I remember death? "If ye be without chastise-

ment, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Consider Lord Jesus, lest ye be wearied in your minds."

If I remember death, I shall not in my priesthood fail to say my Mass, for therein I, in company with the Deathless One, offer death for the life of the world, and so dwell in eternity, yes, even here and now on earth; nor will my remembrance of Him who hath conquered death be neglected or hurried through. I shall say my offices. I shall make my meditation. I shall daily visit the Most Holy Sacrament. I shall intercede. I shall adore. "This is the victory that overcometh"—yes, overcometh even that last enemy to be destroyed—"the victory that is our faith."

If I remember death, I shall fear in my priesthood neither life here on earth nor the death that closes it. And when my little day is done, and I come to the passage, if I have remembered death, faced it clearly all the way, lived in terms of its sure coming, then, it may be, I can know what Paul knew when he wrote: "I have a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better." Then, it may be, I can sing with Brother Francis:

"Praised be He my Lord for our sister, the Death of the
body

From that Death no man that liveth shall escape.

Woe be to him who dies in mortal sin!

Blessed are they who are found walking according to
Thy most holy will.

The second death shall never do them harm.

Praise ye and bless ye my Lord, and give thanks,
And serve Him with a grand humility."

Then, it may be, I shall say with the Master: "Into Thy hands, I do commend my spirit." Then, it may be, another simple Christian priest will go home.

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